Political Theory for an Alter-University Movement:
Decolonial, Abolitionist Study within, against, and beyond the Education Regime

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Abstract

Widespread perceptions of 'crises' of higher education call for the challenge of re-imagining and re-composing it. Recognizing that this is no easy task, I resist simplifying solutions that tend to suppress the complexity of the challenge. To counter such limitations of vision, I motivate the construction of my theory from engaging with controversial questions that are composed from the perspectives of those actors who are most marginalized from higher education, that do not immunize from critique the positions of those who narrate crises about higher education, that explore the rich interconnections of higher education with wider institutions, and that highlight the processes of co-constitution of higher education with its abject figures and places. For examples of the simplifications against which I develop my problematic as a response, I analyze the history of narrations of the 'national dropout crisis' and 'crises of global higher education.' To signify my anti-reductionist re-centering of the marginalized in the composition of my theory, I make my key problematic: how should higher education be changed from *within*, re-working it *against* its current forms, while also re-composing it from the outside and the margins, *with* those who are excluded and marginalized, and *for* enabling the alternative regimes of study that they are already enacting? I abbreviate this problematic as: "within and against // with and for."

Through examining the literature on the politics of higher education and interviewing contemporary participants in struggles around this problematic, I draw out key controversies, particularly between different approaches to describing the complex relations between communities, people, resources, communication, study, teaching, and knowledge. Focusing on narratives that take critical perspectives on university reform

and that present radical alternatives to the institutions of higher education, I find that these approaches also fall back on simplifications, and thereby, neglect to bring the 'within and against' and 'with and for' struggles together in order to grapple with the controversies around the complex tensions between them. In opposition to critical university reformers' simplification of drawing on a romanticized ideal of 'public higher education,' I show how this ideal is based on modernist assumptions—particularly what I call the education-based regime of study—that short-circuit a deeper questioning of what is at stake in contemporary struggles. For a non-modernist, more nuanced alternative to the concepts of 'the public' and 'education,' I elaborate interconnected concepts of 'study,' 'the common,' 'commons,' and 'undercommons.'

Focusing on the historical and contemporary oppositions between the modernist/colonial education regime and alternative regimes of study, I theorize how they are articulated in the undercommons of movements for abolition, decolonization, exodus, and composing communal futures. Then, I illustrate the complexities of this conceptual framework through deploying it to describe the historical and contemporary examples of *marronage* and Zapatismo. Elaborating the theory further in relation to regimes of study, I use it to analyze a contemporary community- and movement-embedded free university, Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities (EXCO). Through militant co-research in my roles as an organizer and as a facilitator of a class on 'Radical Pedagogy,' I investigated how dispositions acquired through institutions of the education-based regime of study infiltrate activities of aspirationally 'radical' study and pedagogy. Against the usual romance of ideals of 'community,' 'commons,' and 'education,' my theory provides more nuanced guidance for organizers of movement-embedded study

projects to create better infrastructures for courses in which participants can grapple with the controversies of their intersecting lives, places, communities, and movements. Taking a decolonial perspective to unsettle modernist/colonialist ideals of ‘security,’ both in classrooms and employment, I call for building relationships-in-struggle between the ‘waste products’ of the education system—from ‘dropouts’ and ‘contingent faculty’ to Foxconn workers—in and through spaces of autonomous study.

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Introduction

Controversies over the Co-Constitution of Higher Education and Its Abjects

Prisons are universities of crime, maintained by the state. – Peter Kropotkin

Considered a fool 'cause I dropped out of high school
Stereotypes of a black male misunderstood
And it's still all good – Notorious B.I.G.

Ask anyone about the state of higher education in the United States today, and you are likely to hear that something is wrong with it. The character of what they perceive as 'the crisis in higher education' will vary—from skyrocketing student debt (now over one trillion dollars), college dropout rates over 40%, and decreasing value of U.S. college degrees in domestic and international job markets, to the casualization of the professoriate (with 75% of faculty in contingent positions), racial and economic inequality and inaccessibility, the de facto exclusion of millions from higher education due to their 'dropping out' of high school and entering the 'schools-to-prisons pipeline,' and the corporatization and marketization of campuses—but the presence of a 'crisis' will not be in doubt.[1] Considering that any perception of a situation of crisis implies a desire

[1] For recent examples of each of these different narratives of 'crises of higher education,' see, respectively: Melissa Block, "Student Loan Debt Exceeds One Trillion Dollars," *NPR News*, April 24, 2012. - http://www.npr.org/2012/04/24/151305380/student-loan-debt-exceeds-one-trillion-dollars; Lauren Burke, "College Dropout Rate Called National Crisis in New Report," *Politic 365*, January 24, 2013. - http://politic365.com/2013/01/24/college-dropout-rate-called-national-crisis-in-new-report/ ; "Higher Education: Not what it used to be," *The Economist*, December 1, 2012. - http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21567373-american-universities-represent-declining-value-money-their-students-not-what-it ; "How the American University was Killed, in Five Easy Steps," *The Homeless Adjunct*, August 12, 2012. https://junctrebellion.wordpress.com/2012/08/12/how-the-american-university-was-killed-in-five-easy-steps/ ; Sarah Kendzior, "The Price of Inequality in Higher Education," *Al Jazeera*, December 23, 2012. - http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/12/20121223122216817378.html ; Jason Breslow, "By the Numbers: Dropping Out of High School," *PBS Frontline*, September 21, 2012, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/education/dropout-nation/by-the-numbers-dropping-out-of-high-school/ ; Steven Higgs, "The Corporatization of the American University," *Counterpunch*, November 21, 2011. http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/11/21/the-corporatization-of-the-american-university/ .

for transforming the world in a way that resolves the causes of the crisis, then this widespread concern calls for the task of re-imagining and re-constituting higher education. Yet, although this political task is widely perceived as important, the complex tensions between the different ways of interpreting the 'crisis' make it a challenge for which there is no easy route.

The response should not be to throw up one's hands and go on with business as usual. Nor should it be to take a simplifying solution that appears promising only by suppressing the complexity of the challenge. Yet, examples of such reductive 'solutions' are ubiquitous, and they come from various political persuasions. Some take the technical fix approach of appealing to new technologies, such as Massively Open Online Courseware (MOOCs - e.g., see Carr 2012). Others promote neoliberal approaches of responding to the decrease of state funding with increased reliance on student tuition and marketizing campuses, or the even more predatory capitalist 'solution' of for-profit universities. Finally, some with more liberal or social democratic persuasions call for returns to the ideal of the 'public university,' with its welfare state underpinnings, and possibly with more unionization of faculty and students to push for such demands from the state.

Each of these 'solutions' addresses their promoter's particular interpretation of the 'crisis' of higher education but at the cost of abandoning the challenge of grappling with the complex tensions between the different interpretations. In these crisis managers' haste to act decisively, they pre-empt the opportunity for engaging in more nuanced study of the challenge—for asking, collectively, how can we better theorize this challenge, so as to address it in more widely sustainable, mutually beneficial ways in practice? This is the

question that I take up as the spur for my dissertation. In response, I develop a conceptual constellation that provides a better basis for articulating descriptions of the key tensions, ambivalences, and controversies—from the perspectives of the many different actors affected by higher education—in considering this challenge.

As a precursor to the presentation of my conceptual framework, I describe here the main pitfalls with the simplifying 'solutions' that I seek to avoid and counter-act in my approach. In most narratives about the 'crises, problems, and solutions' of higher education, their problematic commonality is in the way they imagine the collective subject of higher education, which I distinguish into six, interrelated simplifications. These are present to varying extents in different narratives about higher education, but I wager that all of them are present to some extent, and interconnected with each other, in most narratives. First, they neglect to consider the perspectives of actors who are marginalized and excluded from higher education—from 'dropouts' and permanently contingent faculty to exploited laborers in impoverished countries—or, if such perspectives are included, they tend to be spoken for by others, rather than allowed to participate genuinely in the creation of these narratives. Second, they "ontologize" these marginalized actors and the places that they inhabit, in the sense of abstracting them from, and refusing to recognize, the historical relations and structural conditions that produce their situations of marginality and exclusion, especially the processes of de-valuing, racializing, stigmatizing, and criminalizing them, their knowledges, and the places where they live (cf. Cacho 2012). Third, they exempt from critique their own positions, as narrators and managers of the 'crisis,' and thereby, they exclude themselves and others in similar positions from implication in the 'problem,' and from responsibility

to transform themselves and the institutions and modes of life in which they are enmeshed, as part of the 'solution.' Fourth, they simplify the boundaries of the object that they define as 'higher education' to a limited set of institutions and places, and either omit or focus on a very limited set of its complex connections with wider systems, including those of lower education, corporations, incarceration, and governments. Fifth, they tell simplified versions of the history of this object of 'higher education,' selectively highlighting some parts of this history—often in romanticizing, demonizing, or otherwise misleading ways—while omitting other parts. Sixth, they suppress, or disavow, the processes of co-constitution of the subjectivities and places of higher education with its abject figures and their spaces of abjection—i.e., those people who are marginalized from it and the places in which they live, work, and study. In this way, their 'education' narratives serve as micro-political versions of narratives of 'civilization,' 'modernization,' and 'development,' which suppress the ways in which the de-valuing construction of so-called 'barbarian,' 'primitive,' and 'undeveloped' peoples and places are bound up with the valuing construction of so-called 'civilized,' 'modern,' and 'developed' societies and places, and the ways in which such co-constitution is mediated through power-riddled processes of colonialism, racialization, state-making, and capitalism.[2]

To counter these limitations of vision in imagining the collective subject of higher education, I motivate the construction of my theory from engaging with controversial questions that are composed from the perspectives of those actors who are most marginalized from higher education, that delve into the histories and structural conditions

[2] For theories of the co-constitution of the developed/undeveloped, see theories of 'underdevelopment' (e.g., Rodney 1972; Irogbe 2005; Ferguson 2006). Related, on the co-constitution of states and non-state spaces and the hiding of this co-constitution through 'civilization' narratives, see, for example, Scott 2009.

of these marginalized peoples and their inhabited places, that do not immunize from critique the positions of those who narrate crises about higher education, that explore the rich interconnections of higher education with wider institutions, and that highlight the processes of co-constitution of higher education and those people and places that are marginalized from it. As a way to center these marginalized perspectives, I portray the controversies about their marginalization as of an equal importance as the controversies engaged by those actors who remain included within higher education and who tend to have more influential positions for narrating 'crises' *within and against* it. To signify this re-centering and anti-reductionism in the composition of my theory, I make my key problematic: how should the institutions of higher education be changed from *within*, re-working them *against* their current forms, while also re-working them from the outside and the margins, *with* those people and places that are excluded and marginalized from them, and *for* enabling the alternative forms of study that those people are already enacting. I abbreviate this problematic as: "within and against // with and for."

By bringing these questions together, symbolized with the "//" between the two sides, I signal my inquiries into the processes of co-constitution of inside and outside, included and excluded, centered and marginalized, valued and devalued, educated and uneducated, etc., and the accompanying practices of making such co-constitution suppressed, disavowed, hidden, and obscured. This schematic overview of my problematic is a preview of a more in-depth elaboration that I will give in Chapter 1, which engages in a literature review that identifies a tendency in critical approaches to higher education to focus on either "within and against" or "with and for" approaches and rarely to bring them together in any sustained way. By contrast, I will argue for a

theory—and an accompanying political practice of re-composing higher education—that engages both sides of this problematic simultaneously, providing conceptual "toys" for fleshing out and grappling with the controversies and tensions across and between them.[3] This is how I propose that my theory can offer capacities and encouragement, for those who use it, to step up to the challenges of re-thinking and re-working higher education, and to resist taking the tempting short-cuts of simplifying away the complexities.

On the Suppressed Co-Constitution of Higher Education and its Abjects

Before delving into an overview of how I develop my theory and elaborate it throughout the dissertation, I take a step back to give some examples of the usual simplifications against which I position my problematic as a response, in order to strengthen further my case for the relevance of my approach. I use three overlapping examples—narrations of the 'national dropout crisis,' 'crises of global higher education,' and a 'return to public higher education'—on multiple but related scales (the 'metropolitan,' 'national,' 'local,' 'global,' etc). I choose to focus upon these particular narratives, not because they are necessarily the most central or representative ones, but because they are illustrative of a more general trend: the ways in which simplifying 'crises' and 'solutions' around higher education neglect perspectives of marginalized

[3] I draw the metaphor of a theory as a "toybox" full of conceptual "toys" from an interview with Fred Moten (Harney and Moten 2013, 106). Part of the purpose of my dissertation project, especially through the conversations with my interviewees, is to serve as a kind of experimental workshop or playroom for the construction of theories useful for practical engagement in university struggles. One set of components that I draw on for composing this playroom is the personal narratives, theoretical-political arguments, and practical accounts of the different theorist-practitioners whom I have interviewed. Then, rather than simply taking what they said and analyzing it and synthesizing it together in some kind of imagined purified laboratory space—as if their accounts contained chemicals that I could isolate and mix together in different formulations to try to come up with the perfect formula for a revolutionary pharmaceutical—instead, I treat them as a set of 'tools,' or better yet, 'toys,' which I put into play with other 'toys' that I draw from my own 'toolbox'/'toybox' of understandings, which I have culled from my other experiences, research, and conversations. I develop these metaphors about concepts further in the introduction to Chapter 1.

actors, ontologize them and their living places in abstraction from their histories and structural conditions, immunize themselves from critique, omit interconnections with broader institutions, and suppress the co-constitution of higher education with its abject figures and spaces.

'Dropout' is the most common term used in the U.S. to describe someone who leaves school or university before they are scheduled to graduate. Arising in public discourse in the 1960s along with a kind of moral panic about a proclaimed 'dropout crisis,' this term tends to carry negative connotations—such as laziness, stupidity, dependency, and deviance—that individualize responsibility for a person's act of school non-completion (Dorn 1996). Narratives about 'dropouts' initially focused mostly on students who left lower education early, but their dichotomous partner of the 'graduate' always had an implicit reference to higher education as well. With the expansion of access to higher education from the late 1960s through the 2000s, this discourse's implicit reference to higher education gradually strengthened. Further, in the 2000s, it has developed a complementary narrative of the 'college dropout,' as college attendance became a norm, with a majority of Americans having completed some kind of college work (rising to 63% in 2012, up from 34% in 1971).[4] The issue of 'college dropouts' has increasingly been narrated as a 'crisis'—such as with the 2013 campaign, 'The American Dream 2.0: How financial aid can help improve college access, affordability, and completion," sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—for reasons that draw from a wide range of controversies similar to those given for narrations of a 'high school

[4] Tamar Lewin, "Record Number of Young Americans Earn a Bachelor's Degree," *New York Times*, November 5, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/06/education/record-numbers-of-young-americans-earn-bachelors-degree.html?smid=pl-share

dropout crisis.'[5] Across this variety, part of why the 'dropout' term has become hegemonic is that it is generally consistent with the wider discourse and imaginary of the education system and the status quo of the education system, in service of the capitalist state, from its liberal, Keynesian form in the 1960s to its neoliberal form in the present. Mainstream political institutions with bi-partisan support, such as Colin Powell's America's Promise Alliance and the Obama Administration's "Race to the Top" program, deploy narratives of a national 'dropout crisis' and prescribe solutions of increased funding for 'dropout prevention programs' and more testing to identify 'potential dropouts.'[6]

Constructing a 'National Dropout Crisis'

After his career as a military general, playing a key role in convincing the American public of the need for intervention in the "nuclear crisis" in Iraq, Colin Powell became a principal narrator of a crisis closer to home, about the rogue status of American youth. He and his wife, Alma Powell, founded the America's Promise Alliance, a network of government actors, "nonprofit groups, corporations, community leaders, charitable foundations, faith-based organizations, and individuals," who are allied in

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[5] See, for example, Joy Resmovits, "College Dropout Crisis Revealed in 'American Dream 2.0' Report," *Huffington Post*, January 24, 2013 - http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/24/college-dropout-crisis-american-dream-20_n_2538311.html ; "American Dream 2.0 Report: How financial aid can help improve college access, affordability, and completion," - http://americandream2-0.com/steering-committee-report/ ; Ylan Q. Mui and Suzy Khimm, "College Dropouts Have Debt but No Degree," *Washington Post*, May 28, 2012. http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-05-28/business/35458439_1_college-dropouts-student-debt-tops-college-students ; Siraj Datoo, "Universities are Trying To Stop the Next Mark Zuckerberg From Dropping Out," *The Atlantic*, September 10, 2013, http://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2013/09/universities-are-trying-to-stop-the-next-mark-zuckerberg-from-dropping-out/279513/

[6] "Before today ends, another 3,000 students will drop out of high school and before the year ends, more than one million will have left school. We don't have a dropout problem; we have a dropout crisis." – from the website of the "Dropout Prevention Campaign" of "America's Promise Alliance." "Failure to graduate hurts our children, damages our economy, and weakens our national security position in the world." – Colin Powell, introductory video on website of America's Promise Alliance (2008) - http://www.americaspromise.org

disseminating and implementing "National Action Strategies," including over 100 conferences across all the States, co-ordinated around a campaign of "Dropout Prevention," launched in April, 2008, which was re-named and re-launched as "Grad Nation" in 2010.[7] Their initial mission statement announced a commitment "to seeing that children experience the fundamental resources they need to succeed – the Five Promises (caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, an effective education and opportunities to help others) – at home, in school and out in the community." They describe the perception of crisis that animates their strategic interventions as

> the recognition that when too many children are at risk, we are a nation at risk. With less than one-third of America's young people receiving the essential resources they need for success, we're witnessing today an increased risk of substance abuse, crime and school drop outs. We can't afford this loss of human potential and reversing this tide must be a national priority. (*ibid*)

The term "crisis" means "a *moment of decisive intervention*," and it should be distinguished from the term "failure," "an accumulation or condensation of contradictions," i.e., of "the non-reproductive properties of a system and the dysfunctional symptoms they generate, whether perceived or not" (Hay, 1999: 323-4). Crisis is a condition or process "in which failure is identified and widely perceived," but crisis and failure do not correspond with each other in any simple way. Many different and competing narratives of crisis can be deployed to describe the same set of failures, or a set of failures can have no accompanying crisis narrative at all (a case of "catastrophic equilibrium") (327). Despite this relative autonomy, the failures of a system play some role in selecting for, and selecting out, certain crisis narratives as more or less acceptable to their audience. Further, "responses to crisis that fail to alleviate the symptoms recruited

[7] America's Promise Alliance website, "Our Mission and Vision," http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=6516 - accessed 11/7/08.

to the crisis narrative in the first place are likely to suffer a rapid delegitimisation" (324). Whether or not the discourses of crisis find resonance with the "lived experiences" of the intended audience depends on the "structural context" of contradictions or failures within which these discourses narrate and recruit "such experiences as 'symptoms' of a more generic affliction – the condition of crisis" (332). Through this process of crisis narration and reception, the fragmented apparatuses and institutions of the state are temporarily, "*discursively unified as an object in crisis*," i.e., the state is "reconstituted as an object to be regulated, as an object of regulation." Concurrently, this process also constitutes certain individuals as *subjects* of regulation, both the subjects who are figured passively as undergoing a crisis (e.g., the 'dropouts') and the subjects who are figured actively as the managers and resolvers of this crisis (e.g., the education policy-makers, school administrators, non-profit groups, and teachers who make up the America's Promise Alliance).

The Alliance has been so thorough and proactive in its attempts to create a crisis that they even boast about it on their website.[8] In an online video featuring such powerful figures as Colin Powell, Margaret Spellings (U.S. Education Secretary), Edward Bust (CEO of State Farm Insurance), and conservative pundit Lou Dobbs, they show highlights from a convention they hosted to launch their "Dropout Prevention Campaign."[9] Afterwards, they blasted the media with press releases, and, in their words,

[8] America's Promise Foundation website, "The Colin and Alma Powell Legacy Campaign," http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=6504 - accessed 11/7/08.
[9] "Dropout Prevention Campaign Launch Video Highlights," - http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=11068 - accessed 11/7/08.

"the news media engulfed the public with coverage of this landmark event and report, reporting the startling dropout stats."[10]

Whether their audience receives their message and accepts it as legitimate is by no means guaranteed. The discursive construction of crisis is a process of abstraction and narration, with two main steps (Hay, 1999: 333). First, the crisis-producing agents *selectively* sample particular statistics, contradictions, events, and individuals' lived experiences, and they weave these into "a series of independent narratives which still reflect, albeit to varying degrees, the specificity of each 'story.'" For example, in the news media reports from the "Dropout Prevention Campaign" highlights video, they present a young woman telling her rough story of "dropping out," and newscaster Brian Williams gives statistics of the low and unequal nationwide graduation rates ("African Americans, 53.4%; Whites, 76.2%").[11] The second step of the narration of crisis is the further abstraction of the series of specific, independent narratives into a meta-narrative. The specific narratives' "notions of direct responsibility, causality, and agency" are deleted and replaced by "simplified and simplifying abstractions," such that "a multitude of disparate events can be recruited as 'symptoms,'" each of which confirms the crisis diagnosis (Hay, 1999: 334).

Each aspect of this process of crisis narrative construction is *politically and ideologically* mediated, from the selection of different primary, specific narratives of failures (and the neglect to narrate other events as failures), to their framing these in ways that attribute specific responsibility and causality, to their deployment of reports to

[10] They make claims about the "success" of their event as being "record-breaking," citing statistics of how many people potentially received their crisis narrative: "73,400,000 viewers, 32,700,000 listeners, and 40,400,400 readers." (*ibid*)
[11] "Dropout Prevention Campaign" video, *op cit.*

particular media outlets, to their further abstraction of "simplified and simplifying" meta-narratives. The political agenda of the America's Promise Alliance is not clearly stated anywhere on their website or in their reports, but it can be interpreted as a politically conservative and neoliberal one, based on how they selectively narrate the problems underlying the crisis in ways that obscure inequalities and then offer solutions that serve to reinforce those inequalities. However, the America's Promise Alliance presents itself as a non-political entity by appearing "bipartisan" and "multi-sectoral," as an "alliance" of people who are committed to helping kids "succeed."[12]

Even if their political ideology is consistent across the mainstream views of both the Democratic and Republican parties, it conflicts with other views about America's education system, particularly those of some well-respected advocates for education reform, such as Jonathan Kozol. The America's Promise Alliance's political agenda can be interpreted from the *selectivity* they demonstrate in constructing the primary and meta-narratives of the "dropout crisis," as well as in their attributions of causality and responsibility. On the one hand, they select certain simplified statistics to present as the basis for their claims of a crisis, particularly Christopher Swanson's "Cities in Crisis" report, which calculates graduation rates using the Cumulative Promotion Index (CPI) method.[13] Brian Williams and other mass media agents "engulfed the public" with statistics from this report. On the other hand, they neglect to present other social scientific

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[12] Their founding story features a gathering of two Democratic presidents (Clinton and Carter) and three Republican presidents (Ford, Bush Sr., and Nancy Reagan representing Ronald), and their "multi-sector" alliance partners include governors, mayors, community delegations, leaders of ostensibly left-wing progressive non-profit organizations, in addition to CEOs of multi-national corporations. America's Promise Alliance website, "Our History," http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=11068 - Accessed 11/7/08.

[13] Christopher Swanson, "Cities in Crisis," available online at http://www.americaspromise.org/uploadedFiles/AmericasPromiseAlliance/Dropout_Crisis/SWANSONCitiesInCrisis040108.pdf - Accessed 11/7/08.

research about graduation rates, including several other methods that give more disparaging and more complex analyses of low and unequal graduation rates for minorities.[14] Further, the one report that they present is a simplified version of its author's prior work, which presented a richer analysis, including the strong impact of two other key factors that are deleted in this report: socioeconomic inequality and racial segregation.[15] Their neglect to present the latter statistics is telling of a political bias against left-wing progressive views of what causes students to fail in school, views which tend to highlight the vicious spirals of segregation, economic inequality, and institutional racism (cf. Kozol 2005; Orfield and Eaton 1996; Orfield and Lee 2006; Massey and Denton 1998; Brown et al 2003). This suspicion of political bias is reinforced in examining the way they frame the problem throughout the website: they never use the words "segregation" or "inequality" in the main sections of the website, and in buried sections, they use the word "inequality" only six times and "segregation" only once.[16] By abstracting from the diversity of social scientific research and using only this one report, "Cities in Crisis," they are able to frame their meta-narrative of the crisis in a "simplified and simplifying" way that deletes certain complexities of the causal responsibility for the low graduation rates, particularly those of inequality and segregation. This narrative lays the legitimating groundwork for them to offer simplified solutions to be carried out by their "alliance partners" as crisis managers. They encapsulate these solutions in their

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[14] For examples of two alternative methods that lead to different results and highlight different causal stories of responsibility, see Hauser et al 2004; Balfanz and Legters 2004. Note that the book in which these articles appear, *Dropouts in America* (Orfield 2004), is subtitled "the graduation rate crisis," but it is deploying very different and competing narratives of crisis compared to those deployed by the American Promise Alliance.

[15] Swanson 2004. For Swanson's section on "modeling graduation rates: links to poverty and segregation," see pp. 29-32.

[16] Results of two advanced google searches (http://www.google.com/advanced_search) for the words "inequality" and "segregation" in the domain http://www.americaspromise.org - Accessed 11/7/08.

"Five Promises": "caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education, opportunities to help others."[17] These solutions neglect any systematic structural solutions, such as economic redistribution or desegregation of schools and housing, and instead focus on individual-, family-, nutrition-, market-, and community-based solutions.

A further view of their political agenda can be seen in comparing the few stories that they select with the many stories that they neglect. The most prominent stories that they select to present on their website are not those of individual students but of "communities," on their interactive map with stories of the "100 Best Communities for Young People," based on "their work in upholding the Five Promises."[18] Not only do these stories fail to present any complex descriptions of the problems in those communities, but also they present models of crisis management that tend to conform to the simplified criteria of their "Five Promises," implemented in top-down ways. They neglect and abstract from the rich, causally overdetermined stories of individual lives of the students they figure as "dropouts." By contrast, Jonathan Kozol presents in his book, *Shame of the Nation*, complex narratives of students and teachers in underfunded and segregated schools (Kozol, 2005). In his narratives of the failures of schools from the perspectives of the students and teachers themselves, he highlights many sources of obstacles to education for these children, including the diverse and interconnected negative effects of economic inequality and segregation, as well as the contradictions produced by the very education policies that are supposed to help these children, including many that are repeated in the "Dropout Prevention Campaign." For example, he

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[17] America's Promise Alliance, "The Five Promises," - http://www.americaspromise.org/APAPage.aspx?id=5928&ekmensel=a203b250_248_250_btnlink - Accessed 11/8/08.
[18] America's Promise Alliance, "100 Best Communities for Young People," http://www.americaspromise.org/APAMiniNF.aspx?id=8426 - Accessed 11/8/08.

is a vehement critic of the No Child Left Behind act, with its pushing of a high-stakes testing regime that vastly disproportionately punishes poorer districts by forcing them to reduce their class offerings to those that "teach to the test" (118-9). Also, he criticizes the "school-to-work" programs that are selectively applied to poor, minority-heavy urban schools far moreso than whiter suburban schools.[19]

Critical Analysis of 'Dropout Crises'

In the narrative constructions of the 'dropout crisis,' the perspectives of young people who are characterized as potential or actual 'dropouts' are almost completely effaced, lost in statistics, and only occasionally included in a highly selective way to confirm the narrative desired by those who present themselves as 'managers of the crisis.' In their focus on problems and solutions with individuals, families, nutrition, markets, and communities, they avoid more systematic diagnoses—of the education system, of segregation and inequalities tied up with capitalism and white supremacy, etc. Through avoiding such systemic critique, these crisis narrators immunize their own positions—as politicians, education policymakers, newscasters, social scientists, school administrators, and teachers—from critique, because any description of their causal implication with the problems of school non-completion would have to be traced through the mediators of those political, economic, racial, and educational institutions. Instead, by positioning themselves as external to the 'dropout crisis'—as observers, with expertise gained through education, who benevolently choose to educate the public about this problem—

[19] Kozol, op cit, p. 99. In the urban schools with these programs, children are called "producers" and must participate in utilitarian programs, such as one in an elementary school where students are required to play roles of "management positions," and in many middle schools "children are required, in effect, to choose careers before they even enter adolescence" (90, 100).

they portray themselves as capable managers who can guide those individuals, 'dropouts' and their community members, who are seen as lacking such expertise.

In narratives of the 'dropout crisis,' the figures of the 'graduate' and the 'dropout' complement each other in a dichotomy of contrasting imagined life trajectories. The 'graduate' passes from school to institutions where 'good,' 'independent' people are supposed to go (higher education, well-paying jobs, and heternormative, bourgeois families), while the 'dropout' falls from school into places where 'bad,' 'dependent' people are relegated (dropout prevention centers, juvenile detention, exploitative workplaces, heavily policed neighborhoods, and prisons). The discourse presents these terms as a dichotomy with both a hierarchical contrast and an exclusionary logic: the 'graduate' is seen as, not only better than the 'dropout,' but also as having an independent life trajectory. The success in life of a 'graduate' is seen as having nothing to do with the failure of 'dropouts.' These narratives deny the possibilities of the interdependence of these two figures and of their co-constitution via mediating institutions, such as those of the education system within white supremacist capitalism.

For a schematic understanding of this co-constitution, theories of the relations between the disposal of 'waste' and the production of 'value' offer a helpful guide. In opposition to the normal 'dropout'/'graduate' narrative of the transition of a young person from school to the world beyond school, I frame these transitions as "processes of disposal*"* of the student from the education system (Hetherington 2004). Disposal is "implicated in the making of modes of representational order," as social relations are "performed not only around what is there but also around the presence of what is not (absence)" (159). During and within the space-time gaps of disposal, controversies over

what aspects of the student's desires and sociabilities are valuable or wasteful could arise. The student could raise such controversies on the basis of their affective experiences, and these could lead to questions of the geographical, historical, ethical, and political responsibilities for the valuing/wasting of the student; where/when does the disposal process begin and end, and who/what is responsible for these disposals? Such controversies are suppressed and stabilized by the practices of subjectification associated with the narratives of the stigmatized 'dropout' figure, the fetishized 'graduate' figure, and the chronological time of 'graduation.'

Framing the student as a potential 'dropout' provides a contrast with framing the student as a potential 'graduate' (note: the contrasting effect depends on the appearance of determinacy of the dichotomy), giving the latter an appearance of durable, measurable value, and also lends a sense of urgency and importance to the graduation trajectory. The 'graduate' figure's appearance of measurable value comes from the 'dropout' being framed in association with other discourses—'criminality,' 'dependency,' 'social burden,' 'deviance,' etc.— that make the figure into a kind of waste or by-product of the education system with zero value. By contrast whatever leads to its opposite is seen as having some positive, homogenous value that can be possessed by the individualized student. The individualizing 'dropout'/'graduate' narrative is a means for transforming concerns about responsibility for wider problems in the (neo)liberal capitalist state into individualized forms—as perceived contradictions and failures that arise in (and in anticipation of) the *transitions* between the world of education and the world of work. In the liberal-capitalist schema, these worlds are constructed as two modes or spheres of life that rely on *fixed assumptions* for the stability of their value practices. The life stage of

school/youth is framed as developmental, paternalist, and dependent, while the life stage of work/adulthood is framed as atomistic, fend-for-yourself ('self-made man'), and independent. A genealogy of the dependence/independence dichotomy shows how identities, or subject-forms, figured as dependent (native, slave, housewife, welfare recipient, student) have been socio-historically constructed in contrast with an identity of an independent figure (the wage worker, 'freely choosing' to sell his/her labor power) (Fraser and Gordon, 1994). This dichotomy—which continues in the 'dropout'/'graduate' distinction—is a key tool in a system of assigning positive value to the independent identity and negative or zero value to the dependent identity.

In trying to understand this system, it is important to highlight that the intertwined constructions of these identities are not merely the creation of stereotypes but rather key parts of an ontologizing process. While stereotyping refers to a process of misrecognition—such as in "the multiple ways law-abiding people of color are misrecognized as criminal and treated by others as such"—practices of the 'dropout' narrative also participate in processes of criminalization, which "refers to the various ideological and material processes that turn some people into criminals by making it all but impossible for them to be law-abiding" (Cacho 2012, 29). Seeing the 'dropout' narrative in the context of an interconnected web of liberal discourses around 'criminality,' 'deviance,' and 'non-normativity,' it plays the role of a seed of a more developed figure of 'the criminal'—i.e., as an early stage on an imagined life trajectory of 'becoming-criminal.' Considering the dominant binary view in liberal discourses of "repudiating criminality" coupled with "recuperating social value" (13), narrative practices around education tend to draw on and reinforce this view, especially through the

'dropout' discourse. This is seen with 'dropout prevention programs' that deploy rhetoric and images of a 'latent graduate,' which implicitly or explicitly places these young people in the early stages of the dichotomous imaginal trajectories of (neo)liberal discourses: "re-presenting young men *of color* who lead unsympathetic lives—gang members, drug users, or risk-takers—as latent law-abiding, hard-working, family-oriented men who have been 'unfairly' excluded from the resources and opportunities that would lead to responsible, normative choices" (160, emphasis added).

I highlight "of color" here to note the importance of the racialized dimensions of this process. This racialization plays a major role in how criminalization is an ontologizing process. In association with many other dichotomies, the racial dichotomies of black/white, non-white/white, etc. are central in enabling the promoters of (neo)liberal discourses to find their perlocutionary success in spreading them to a wide audience who hold explicitly racist or implicitly racist (i.e., 'colorblind racist') beliefs. This ontologizing happens via a symbiosis of discourses of education, criminalization, and racialization, partly in relation to the body of the person and partly in relation to the place in which the person lives. By an act of "transparent recognition," dominant narratives around 'dropouts' lend themselves to placing a 'dropout'—as a 'latent criminal'—into a body of color and into places where bodies of color live and study (e.g., 'ghettos,' 'cultures of poverty,' 'million dollar blocks,' and 'dropout factories') (Cacho 2012, 9). They have this effect by abstracting from, and refusing to recognize, "the material histories, social relations, and structural conditions that criminalize populations of color and the impoverished places where the live." This abstraction is seen in the narratives of 'dropout crises' described above in which their narrators present racial differences in

graduation rates without delving into the structural, historical conditions of the production of those differences. These 'dropout' discourses build on and strengthen processes of criminalization, because they "'tame' racial differences," in the sense that they allow for the simplistic interpretation of these racial differences that reduces them to "criminal natures, by making them all too easy to recognize, to 'know' as unknowable and irrational, thereby foreclosing identification and empathy" (27). Thus, narratives about 'dropouts' not only draw on the imagined future trajectory of 'becoming-criminal' but also set up the pre-conditions for creating those narratives of 'criminality,' because they portray bodies who are inserted into the figure of 'dropout' as 'irrational,' in the sense of being uneducated in contrast with the normatively educated 'graduate.'

In collusion with (neo)liberal ideologies and values around private competition, self-esteem, independence, and personal responsibility, the graduate/dropout narrative has the effect of *individualizing* this ontologized body. Along with these associated (neo)liberal narratives, it projects an image of an individual that is abstracted from the geographic, socio-historical conditions of the transitions between school/youth and work/adulthood. This narrative denies the openness of the disposal process and continually projects responsibility back onto the individual, parents, and community (with given authority relations). The individualized student is made to internalize the task of dealing with the gaps of the disposal process. The dropout/graduate narrative treats certain self-fragments/desires (and their histories and imagined trajectories) as waste and certain as valuable. What the narrative hides—as a condition for its effective circulation—is that the wasted, or non-valued, fragments are co-constituted with those that are valued, as "human value is made legible in relation to the deviant, the non-

American, the nonnormative, the pathologized, and the recalcitrant—the legally repudiated 'others' of human value in the United States" (Cacho 2012, 18; also, cf. Barrett 1999). The production and ascription of the value of 'the graduate' depends on disavowing the relations of its co-constitution with the already devalued category of 'the dropout,' such as through the mediating institutions that interconnect them with relations of inequality, racial segregation, and the systemic metrics of grades, credits, and degrees for judging and assigning value. The student who subscribes to the 'dropout'/'graduate' dichotomous narrative takes on forces that push them to bury (i.e., treat as waste, as not valuable) their "excessive desires" to the extent that they contradict the already existing institutions with their standards for measuring value—e.g., rules of appropriate behavior, grades, high-stakes testing, etc. (Papadopoulos et al 2008). The student's task of dealing with the gaps is made more difficult by already existing inequalities, hierarchies, and discriminations (of white supremacy, capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, ageism, language, etc.). Further, the dropout/graduate narrative accepts and reifies the already given segregations and inequalities across communities (e.g., school attendance zones).

At multiple levels of the education system—secondary, post-secondary, and graduate—there are different versions of the 'dropout'/'graduate' narrative. Through the hierarchical relations between these different levels, their 'waste' disposal processes are co-constitutive with the processes of measuring and assigning *value* to the products—e.g., the 'graduates'—of each level. For each level of the education system, the value of the products (graduates' labor-power, research, teaching) is determined in a process that is co-constitutive with the disposal of the 'waste' ('dropouts,' 'failures') through particular accounting, measuring, and disciplinary practices (grades, 'zero tolerance'

behavioral policies, tracking, segregation, etc.). Across these levels, the waste/value co-constitutive processes are inter-related, in that the value of the degree of the 'graduate' at each 'higher' level is predicated on the waste/value processes on each of the 'lower' levels. For each level, this co-constitutive process is hidden, obscured, and suppressed through particular discourses that also simultaneously assign value and lack of value to the products and by-products (e.g., discourses of 'dropout'/'graduate,' 'meritocracy,' 'job market,' 'zero tolerance,' 'achievement gap,' 'tenure-track faculty'/'non-tenure-track faculty,' 'security'/'contingency,' 'choice,' 'student'/'worker,' etc.)

Against the obscuring of this co-constitution, there are ways to reveal and highlight it, such as through describing school non-completion in ways that are alternative to the hegemonic 'dropout' frame. In opposition to the individualizing of blame onto 'dropouts,' the terms 'pushouts' and 'forceouts' direct inquiry about responsibility away from the young person and towards other actors, including the education system as well as other institutions, such as the police and prison. Another term, 'rise-out,' also directs critical attention toward the school out of which the person is seen as 'rising,' while attributing agency to that person. Against the individualizing discourse of the 'dropout,' the 'pushout' and 'forceout' terms are circulated to draw critical attention to wider institutions, such as through narratives of the problems of segregation between and within schools, racially discriminatory 'zero tolerance' disciplinary policies, and tracking that funnels young people into the 'schools-to-prisons pipeline,' with a disproportionate impact on historically marginalized youth (Kozol 2005; Meiners 2007).

Thereby, the 'pushout' and 'forceout' framings expand the collective subject of education—both the subjects who are problematized as causes of 'crisis' and the subjects who are empowered to manage and resolve these problems—from the 'dropout' discourse's focus on individual students as the 'problem' to seeing the construction of such persons' lives as co-constituted with others, particularly those who are coded as 'graduates,' as well as with broader practices, institutions, and systems. Further, these framings point to the co-constitution of the education system with its spaces of abjection—i.e., those places that are seen through the lens of the dominant discourse as lacking in 'educational value,' such as poor, marginalized communities and prisons. 'Solutions' proposed on the terms of these framings of 'pushout' and 'forceout' include the abolition of disciplinary and segregating practices and the adoption of, and increased funding for, community-embedded programs of mutual support for young people within and outside of schools.[20] Yet, the hegemonic 'dropout' discourse tends to obscure and marginalize such critiques and possible solutions by pushing subscriptions to the 'graduate' frame and other individualizing frames that constitute the discourse of the education system—e.g., 'the achievement gap,' tracking into 'college bound' and 'vocational' levels, 'merit' awards based on standardized testing, etc.

[20] See, for example, the Dignity in Schools Campaign, which "challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation's schools and advocates for the human right of every young person to a quality education and to be treated with dignity" - http://www.dignityinschools.org - Also, see the Pushouts Project in Philadelphia, PA, "a youth-led multimedia project investigating why young people of color are failing to graduate from Philadelphia public schools and what is being done at the community level to address the problem." - http://pushout-philly.blogspot.com/

'National Crises' in 'Global Higher Education': A Critical Genealogy

Although the 'dropout'/'graduate' discourse is a powerful tool for burying the co-constitution of higher education with its abject figures and spaces, it is not the only such tool. Rather, it has this effect as part of a wider, interconnected set of discourses, which have changed across history and geography in response to changing political-economic contexts, and which have become sedimented in institutions through the practices of those persons who subscribe to these discourses. A particularly pressing question for my argument here is why narratives of the 'dropout crisis' on a *national* level are still deployed, and increasingly so, during a time of so-called *globalization* in the past forty years, with a supposed decline in importance of the national scale. In what ways are constructions of 'national' and 'global' scales complementary and/or in conflict with each other in narrations of the 'crises' of higher education by those who seek to manage these crises? To address these questions and to examine the ways in which the 'dropout' discourse has been inter-related with others in ways that suppress the co-constitution of higher education with its abjects, I present a brief, critical genealogy of 'crises' of higher education.

Through this historical account, I develop a response to these questions that provides a motivation for reading the rest of my dissertation. The answers turn out to be relative to particular historically, politically body-and-place situated contexts. Whether or not particular constructions of 'national' and 'global' 'crises' of higher education are complementary or conflictual with each other depends on which political actors are subscribing to them and what they do with them—i.e., how they articulate the 'national' and 'global' scales and the narratives of 'crisis' in relation to their wider political projects

(e.g., movements for 'national decolonization' can complement 'anti-capitalist alter-globalization' while conflicting with 'neoliberal globalization'). Considering this historical, political relativity of the questions, for those who wish to engage with them at any particular place-bound historical moment, what matters most—i.e., what is most relevant for them in their struggles—is to have better ways of describing and understanding what is at stake in the controversies over different narrations of the 'crises of higher education,' including the relations of scale. To address this need, my dissertation offers guidance for engaging the complexity of these controversies without falling back on simplifying shortcuts.

Such simplifications tend to be deployed by those who have an interest in minimizing systemic change. For those persons who desire to maintain the status quo of the U.S. education system (i.e., as interrelated harmoniously with capitalism and the liberal democratic state), they must present a story of themselves, or someone, as successfully managing its 'crises.' Thus, in their narration of these 'crises,' they must deploy narrative devices that hide, obscure, or explain away the co-constitution of the education system with its abject figures and places, because revealing that co-constitution would be inconvenient for their narratives, in the sense that it would de-stabilize their claims to the legitimacy of the system and of their own positions as 'crisis managers.' My argument is that for them to compose and deploy these narratives in ways that resonate with their audiences sufficiently to make them subscribe to them, they need to articulate connections between many different conceptual dichotomies, stitching them together into apparently logical, seamlessly whole, legitimate images of the world and of their audiences' positions in that world. These dichotomies include: lower/higher education,

national/global, local university campus / global academia, material/immaterial world, represented/representation, primitive/modern, developing/developed, uneducated/educated, dependent/independent, dropout/graduate, non-tenure track/tenure-track, among many others. In this section, I elaborate this argument by describing the ways in which narrators of 'crises' of the U.S. education system, over the past fifty years, have deployed various articulations of these dichotomies, adapting them in response to historical changes—both 'from above' and 'from below'—in the political-economic context, in their audiences, and in themselves. In this critical genealogical account, a "critical history of the present,"[21] I focus on three periods that I distinguish from each other by particular political-economic shifts—between the Keynesian welfare state, neoliberalism, and the 'global economic meltdown' of 2008—but I also highlight the continuities and overlaps across them.

Although concerns about early school leavers have been expressed in U.S. public discourse since the turn of the twentieth century, the 'dropout' did not become a major public concern until the early 1960s (Dorn, 1996). From 1900 to the 1950s, high school gradually became the dominant and normative institutional place for teenagers, as finding employment became tougher for their age group and high school credentials became more valuable. Despite increasing high school attendance, in the late 1950s and early 1960s formerly disparate concerns about early school leavers—including welfare dependency, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, and personality flaws—cohered around a stereotype of the 'dropout,' seen as varying from the expected behaviors of the norm of the 'graduate.' The political-economic backdrop to this discursive shift included,

[21] What Foucault calls a "critical history of the present" is "concerned with that which is taken-for-granted, assumed to be given, or natural within contemporary social existence, a givenness or naturalness questioned in the course of contemporary struggles" (Dean 1994, 35).

internationally, the Cold War and its 'hot' conflicts, especially the Vietnam War, with its domestic response of the anti-war movement, which converged with other social movements around civil rights, the counter-culture, Black Power, Third World decolonization, feminism, and queer liberation.

With the conflicts of the Cold War and Vietnam War creating 'crisis' situations for U.S. citizens' sense of themselves as part of a 'national' community, pressure increased on education policymakers and administrators to stigmatize any attempts of young people to evade their incorporation—through disciplinary practices of schooling and the rite of graduation—into reproduction of the political-economic status quo as devoted citizens, workers, and family members. Domestically, the Black Freedom Movement pushed the federal government to legislate the desegregation of schools with *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, but the battle over the implementation of this new law would be drawn out at the state and metropolitan levels over the next two decades, until hitting legislative dead-ends around remedies to de facto segregation in the 1970s, leading to ongoing struggles around de- and re-segregation up to the present (Orfield and Lee 2006; Orfield and Eaton 1996; Massey and Denton 1998). The forces for the status quo in both of these struggles, around the Cold War and civil rights, converged in their support of narratives of a 'dropout problem,' which provided a discursive tool for suppressing dissent by the anti-war and civil rights movements while also constructing imaginaries of an ideal, independent, patriotic, hard-working individual who devotedly serves the U.S. national state and economy.

In the early 1960s, the 'dropout problem' was composed in the U.S., not so much as a top-down effort by federal or state governments, but rather by "hundreds of

educators and school critics across the country," in ways that resonated with the capitalist state's dominant ideologies and policies (Dorn 1996, 8). They crafted their narratives of this 'dropout problem' in ways that reflected contemporary concerns—"juvenile delinquency and the consequences of workplace automation," particularly unemployment and its accompanying dependency—while avoiding discussion of other issues, such as civil rights and the Cold War (6). Such constructions of the 'problem' suppressed explicit narratives about the latter controversies, despite the partial origins of the fears of 'dependency' and 'criminality' in response to the Cold War promotion of capitalist, 'self-made man' independence and in racist reactions to the civil rights movement's successes at pushing desegregation. Further, these constructions of the 'dropout problem' were deployed via narratives that implicitly supported the sides of those controversies that were consistent with upholding the status quo, while omitting, silencing, and obscuring the other sides of those controversies, particularly those that were promoted by the labor, anti-war, and civil rights movements.

The omissions in these narratives reflected the racist prejudices of the day, within the context of battles over desegregation. School officials shaped their message about the 'dropout problem' in ways that neglected "racial differences in educational attainment" (Dorn 1996, 100). Bureaucratic defenses of segregation silenced any discussion of issues related to race, "ignoring critics insofar as they could" and "muted activists by responding selectively to criticism," because recognizing and grappling with these issues "would have been uncomfortable for those who felt obliged to defend segregation," especially in its *de jure* forms in the South but also in its *de facto* forms in the North (100-105). It was not as if the school counselors and administrators were ignorant about

race; far from it. Rather, in the privacy of their offices and meetings, they made distinctions based on race—such as in their design of intentionally difficult tests for Black students who desired to transfer as part of integration, hidden under the mask of testing for "individual characteristics"—while in their public pronouncements about the 'dropout problem,' "they were silent about possible connections between racial inequalities and the dropout problem" (103). Also, their narratives omitted discussion of "the question of whether students had a right to education," such as around racially discriminatory practices of discipline and punishment that forced many Black students out of school, as well as issues of responses to student pregnancy and special education placement (100, 106). Despite and against the efforts of civil rights activists to insert these issues of race—along with broader problems of classroom overcrowding, resource allocation, and desegregation—into the public discussions, the media selectively favored the narratives that omitted these issues (115-116). Partly because of the hegemony of these status quo supporting narratives of the 'dropout problem,' the movement for desegregation was delayed for many years, and was eventually halted in the mid-1970s, as evidenced by a gradual increase in *de facto* segregation from then to the present (Orfield and Lee 2006; Orfield and Eaton 1996).

In opposition to education policymakers, media, and school administrators use of the 'dropout' stereotype as a discursive tool to stigmatize school non-completers, the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s deployed alternative, affirmative framings of leaving school—such as the counter-culture, with its spokesperson Timothy Leary's slogan of "turn on, tune in, drop out," and their hundreds of free schools (Miller 2002), the civil rights movements' use of the 'pushout' framing, and the Black Panthers'

promotion of alternative, black nationalist schools (Murch 2010). Rather than seeing school non-completion as a 'crisis' of helpless youth requiring management and reintegration into the system, these oppositional social movements saw 'dropping out' both as an implicit critique of the status quo and as a beginning for youth to organize themselves into movements for radical transformation.

Against the hegemonic discourses narrowing the scope of the 'dropout problem' to lower education, the rise of the 'dropout' discourse in the 1960s and 1970s must be seen in relation to the wider context of the multiple forces that pushed for the expansion of higher education. 'From above,' these forces included the Cold War context pushing the federal government to increase funding for higher education as a means of constructing a 'national' imaginary (Kamola 2013a): in the hard sciences for military research purposes (Lowen 1997), in the humanities for producing a 'national' literature (Newfield 2003; Readings 1996), and in the social sciences with area studies (Wallerstein 1997). 'From below,' with the civil rights movement pushing for transformation of higher education, a big part of the federal and state response was to expand higher education to include more students of color, including increasing access with more community colleges, more seats in public universities, and the creation of new departments that focused on knowledges and histories of marginalized peoples, such as African-American Studies and Ethnic Studies (Rogers 2012). Although these two different sources of pressure for the transformation of higher education were mostly at odds in their political purposes, they also converged with their general effects of expanding funding for, and access to, higher education. The opening of greater possibilities for a wider number and diversity of people to attend higher education made the transition from high school to

college into a more normal phenomenon. This normalization contributed to the background acceptance of the stigmatizing 'dropout' discourse. The complementary relation between these two phenemona is also seen in how the 'dropout'/'graduate' discourse was promoted not only by the forces of the status quo in the education system, but also with the more reform-focused wing of the civil rights movement, such as the United Negro College Fund's 'dropout prevention' campaign with the slogan "a mind is a terrible thing to waste" (Gasman 2007, Chapter 7).

In all of these narratives, the imaginary of the 'nation' is deployed as a political, geographic, communal '*container'* in which the perceived crises—whether of 'dropouts' or of the purposes and value of higher education—are seen as taking place.[22] One example out of many of this use of the 'national' frame is seen in the Georgia state superintendent of education, Purcell's 1962 speech on the importance of the "dropout problem":

> Because the product of our schools will so directly affect the future of our nation and its economy, we are vitally concerned with providing the best education for ALL students. … We are, therefore, vitally concerned with the problem of the high school drop-out. (quoted in Dorn 1996, 104)

Through such narratives, Purcell and many others were constructing an image of the U.S. nation as a place in which high school graduates would contribute to its betterment. Conversely, by omitting any discussion of race, they were suppressing the controversies over racial inequalities that others, such as the Black Panthers, would promote in conflicts over constructions of the nation.

Drawing on the "ontopological," merging relationship between the national community, the state, and the geographic territory of the nation (Campbell 1998), the

[22] On the history of constructed views of the nation-state's geographic territory as a kind of 'container' for a national society, as part of the wider schema of the "territorial trap," see Agnew 1994.

framing of the ‘nation-state’ acts as a stabilizing reference for the ‘dropout crisis,’ in the sense that it provides a mutually reinforcing ‘container effect’ in relation with the imaginaries deployed to frame both schools and universities. Through stacking these imaginary ‘containers’ in a kind of “zoom effect” ordering of geographical scales (Latour 2005), the school and the university are constructed as miniature versions of nation-states.

The statist imaginary of education entails, on the one hand, the unified, whole institutions of the education system—particularly, schools and universities—associated with certain spatio-temporal boundaries, evaluative practices for defining the porosity of their boundaries, and authorities empowered to police the boundaries and administer the evaluative practices. On the other hand, the educational imaginary includes a whole, unified ‘self’ that passes through these institutions and, through the practices of education—testing, grading, credits, graduation, admissions, rankings, etc.—takes on its own definitions of its boundaries and its value (in relation to wider evaluative practices in the political economy of the capitalist state). The dominant discourses that sustain the taken-for-granted assumptions of the education system rely on an ontology of a two-dimensional, individualizing and totalizing view of reality. My theorizing of this ontology adapts what Timothy Mitchell calls the “state effect,” in which certain “disciplinary practices produce the effects of the appearance of a two-dimensional form of reality” with individuals, society (as an aggregate of individuals), and practices on one side and structures (social context, framework), state, and institutions on the other (Mitchell 1999, 180). In the education system, I theorize micro-political versions of the “state effect”: in lower education, *the school effect,* and in higher education, *the university effect*—the

abstraction of the university as a unified whole, which is produced, not only by higher education's explicit proponents, but also by certain disciplinary practices, including the branding of the university, the competition of administrators to increase the value of their university's brand in competitive rankings, and the desires of faculty and students alike to affiliate their individualized 'selves' with the brand as a means of valorizing their educations and careers.

In the spaces of schools and universities, the figures who are included and centered, students on track to become 'graduates,' are complemented in the hegemonic discourses with figures of abjection, 'dropouts,' and spaces of abjection, including 'ghettos,' 'welfare' homes, 'workfare' jobs, 'cultures of poverty,' and prisons as places for 'criminals.' With the container and zoom effects interrelating the 'national' scale for the state and the 'university' and 'school' scales for educational administrations, narratives of the 'dropout crisis' construct and stabilize images of scaled, bounded places, and of individualized figures who are valued or de-valued as they pass through these places. In concert with legitimating the rule of the nation-state by politicians and policy-makers, the complementary spiral of these discourses and imaginaries stabilizes claims of legitimacy of rule of administrators, teachers, and professors within the bounded spaces of the school, university campus, and classrooms. In the rise of discourses of 'globalization,' the 'container' and 'zoom effect' relationships between the imaginaries of the nation-state and of universities and schools underwent complex transformations in relation to different narratives of the wider framing of 'the global.'

With the shift to post-Fordism and neoliberalism in the 1970s and 1980s, higher education was reconceived as a 'private good,' and accordingly, its funding from state

and federal sources declined (Kamola 2013a). During the political-economic era of Fordism and the Keynesian welfare state, the working class compromised with the state and the capitalist class in exchange for almost free higher education (Caffentzis 1975). Social movements' successes in the 1960s and 1970s, including revolts on college campuses, undercut the Keynesian ideology of investing in college education as a means for creating productive workers and devoted citizens. The new neoliberal regime under Ronald Reagan responded with ending the "class deal" and putting the costs of higher education, essentially, "the cost of preparing oneself for work," onto the workforce itself (Caffentzis 2010). Yet, higher education continued to be portrayed as a necessity for employment, especially considering the increasingly large differential in wages between college and high school graduates. Thus, the 'class deal' was gradually replaced from the 1970s and on with what George Caffentzis calls the "edu-deal," in which people paid for higher education with the assumed guarantee that their degree would be a ticket to a secure, satisfying job and livelihood. A key means through which students have afforded increasing tuition costs is through taking out student loans, with "mounting student debt which, by turning students into indentured servants to the banks and/or state, acts as a disciplinary mechanism on student life, also casting a long shadow on their future" (Caffentzis 2010; also, Adamson 2009). The pressures to become a college graduate have increased year after year, with the rise in the 1980s of fears around the competitiveness of US students in the 'global economy'—such as spread through the influential report "A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform."[23] Such pressure increased

[23] An example from this report of the narrative of a 'risk' of US students losing in 'international competitiveness' is the following: "The time is long past when American's destiny was assured simply by an abundance of natural resources and inexhaustible human enthusiasm, and by our relative isolation from the malignant problems of older civilizations. The world is indeed one global village. We live among

further in the 1990s with discourses of the 'knowledge society' and 'information revolution' that narrated a demand for higher education to train workers, especially as 'mental labor,' with communicative, flexible skills (Ross 2000; Terranova 2000; Bousquet 2008).

The neoliberal reduction of state and federal funding for higher education in the 1980s had a destabilizing effect on the containers of the 'state' and 'nation' that had complemented the 'dropout'/'graduate' discourse, and thereby, threatened to undercut their combined legitimation of the educational status quo. With the increasing turn to tuition as a funding source, the collective subject of higher education was put in 'crisis,' as the empowering of students as 'customers' purchasing the 'private good' of education created a potential threat to the authority of administrators and professors who laid claim to ruling the territories of universities. To find a replacement for legitimating these authority relations, with their resonance in wider circuits of capitalist and state control, a complement for the containers of the 'state' and 'nation' was needed. This was found in the imaginary of 'the global,' which was constituted from many different discursive sources. Narratives relating to students as economic actors included those about individual students competing for spots in the 'global higher education market,' and then competing to become more highly valued 'graduates' in the 'global economy' and 'global job market' as "strategic cosmopolitans" (K. Mitchell 2003). Other sources of 'the global' narratives tapped into other aspects of students' lives, supplementing the 'civic' component of the national frame with narratives of student participation in the 'global public sphere,' 'global civil society,' 'global development,' and 'global

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determined, well-educated, and strongly motivated competitors. We compete with them for international standing and markets, not only with products but also with the ideas of our laboratories and neighborhood workshops." (National Commission on Excellence in Education 1983, 10)

humanitarianism.' These narratives have been deployed through specific institutional innovations promoted both by universities and outside actors, including: increased study abroad programs (Goodwin and Nacht 1988, 21-29), more philanthropic funding for research and programs with a 'global' focus while de-funding area studies (West and Martin 1997), increased courses on 'globalization' and programs of 'global studies,' and universities establishing 'global campuses,' making higher education "the United State's fifth largest exportable service as universities send their curriculum, research, and their own brands overseas in search of larger pools of tuition-paying students" (Kamola 2013a; cf. Ross 2008).

Since the so-called 'global economic meltdown' of 2008, a new spurt of these discourses for legitimating 'global higher education' has arisen, in response to what George Caffentzis calls "the end of the edu-deal" (Caffentzis 2010). With the financial crisis resulting in "budget cutbacks, layoffs, and the massification of unemployment," capital reneges on the 'edu-deal' guarantees of job security and high wages in exchange for workers and families shouldering the costs of higher education. In response to the attempts to offload these budget cuts onto students through tuition increases—which also serves as means of further disciplining the future 'cognitariat,' student movements around the world have risen up in rebellion since 2008. These uprisings have included massive demonstrations and occupations of university buildings in Greece in 2008, at the New School (2008) and New York University (2009) in New York City, across California and all over Europe in 2009 and 2010, the sixty-day occupation of the University of Puerto Rico in Spring 2010, across the United Kingdom in 2010, South Africa in 2010-2012, Chile in 2011, Quebec in 2012, among others (Inoperative Committee, 2009, Schwarz, et

al., 2010, After the Fall, 2010, and Solomon and Palmieri, 2011). These student movements intersected with movements of 'alter-globalization,' such as through the World Social Forums, that deployed alternative narrative constructions of 'the global,' in ways that are in friction with the dominant neoliberal capitalist, neo-colonial forms of 'globalization.' For example, one of the coordinating platforms for the student movements across countries, "The International Student Movement," has spread the hashtag of "#1world1struggle" and calls for a "Global Education Strike" to connect and build solidarity across geographically disparate struggles.[24]

In addition to the repressive backlash to quell these uprisings with physical violence by state and campus police, corporate and state forces have also deployed ideological devices to shore up the legitimacy of the educational status quo. These take the form of increasing dissemination of discourses of 'global' higher education, including some new institutions, such as 'Massively Open Online Courses' (MOOCs - e.g., Coursera and EdX).[25] For example, one of the main promoters of MOOCs, Anant Agarwal, the President of EdX, imagines that the expansion of courses in French would create "huge reach" in Africa, and "in the longer term, our mission is to dramatically increase access to education worldwide" (quoted in Rivard 2013). MOOCs have been touted by corporate philanthropic foundations as a possible solution to the "crisis in higher education" for addressing the concern that many of those students who are 'dropping out' of schools and colleges do so because they are bored with them and want

[24] For examples of how the memes of "#1world1struggle" and "Global Education Strike" have spread widely across student movements, see the websites for the International Student Movement at: http://www.emancipating-education-for-all.org/ and https://www.facebook.com/ism.global - Accessed 3/17/13.

[25] As of February 2013, the for-profit Coursera had over 2.8 million registered users and contracts with over 60 universities, while the non-profit EdX had over 675,000 users and contracts with 12 universities (Rivard 2013). For more info on Coursera and EdX, see respectively, https://www.coursera.org/about and https://www.edx.org/about .

to have easier and cheaper access to more learning opportunities (Carr 2012).[26] Against the latter's arguments, many academics have argued that these MOOCs are a reductive 'solutions' that is merely a way to increase profits for increasingly profit-driven administrations and 'star' faculty. For example, in the article "Unthinking Technophilia," six community college faculty members denounced MOOCs for disconnecting the practices of teaching and learning from their affective grounding in face-to-face interactions.[27]

In these critical responses to MOOCs—and to other corporate-led 'solutions'—academics often appeal to a romanticized history of public higher education. For example, in Aaron Bady's otherwise incisive essay, "The MOOC Moment and the End of Reform," he sees the "direction the MOOC tsunami is taking" as "the capture of public education."[28] Similarly, in an open letter to the co-president of Coursera, Daphne Koller, Robert Meister argues: "The question is not whether we who teach in public higher education can or should resist the creation of a truly 'free' informational Common, but whether we can keep education as a necessary knowledge commons *public* in innovative, egalitarian ways that run counter to what you and your rivals are planning and doing."[29] Six professors at San Jose State wrote an open letter to Professor Michael Sandel criticizing him, edX, and the California State University system for attempting to implement MOOCs. Their letter concluded with the argument that: "Professors who care

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[26] For example, see the Gates Foundation's statement of support for MOOCs on their website, including "strategic investments" in MOOCs of grants totaling over $3 million in 2012. - http://www.gatesfoundation.org/postsecondaryeducation/Pages/massive-open-online-courses.aspx

[27] For example, see the article "Unthinking Technophilia" by six community college faculty members, *Inside Higher Ed,* January 14, 2013 - http://www.insidehighered.com/views/2013/01/14/essay-says-faculty-involved-moocs-may-be-making-rope-professional-hangings

[28] Aaron Bady, "The MOOC Moment and the End of Reform," *The New Inquiry*, 2013, http://thenewinquiry.com/blogs/zunguzungu/the-mooc-moment-and-the-end-of-reform/

[29] Robert Meister, "An Open Letter to Daphne Koller, Co-Founder and Co-President of Coursera," http://cucfa.org/news/2013_may10.php

about public education should not produce products that will replace professors, dismantle departments, and provide a diminished education for students in public universities."[30]

Such critiques of MOOCs that call for 'defending public education' can be effective rallying cries for organizing against the most obviously corporatizing forces in higher education. Yet, their arguments often ring hollow and inject obfuscating simplifications into the debates, because they rely upon a mythical view of higher education's history. Responding to the use of similar slogans in the recent student movements, Mark Paschal argues: "the institutions of higher education we mobilize around are not now and have never properly been 'Our University'" (Paschal 2012). Drawing from his dissertation research on the history of universities, Paschal writes: "The 'American Public University'—which should include private universities as a subset—is a fundamentally capitalist organization of knowledge and laborers that arose as the industrial capitalist class in the United States was coming to assert its hegemony over the US in the mid-19th century." Throughout this history, Paschal highlights how reform has been thrust upon the university from bodies outside of them, especially from changes in "the economic and political conditions that foster and encourage its existence." The appeal for reclaiming a public ideal of higher education is one that I will critically engage in more detail in Chapter 1, but before doing so I introduce here further forms of simplifying narratives around crises of 'global higher education.'

With the turn to the 'global' frame for imagining the 'crisis' of higher education, some new figures and places of abjection emerge. The narratives of 'dropouts' are still

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[30] "An open letter to Professor Michael Sandel," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013, http://chronicle.com/article/The-Document-an-Open-Letter/138937/

very prevalent, but narratives about them tend to be articulated more directly with the 'national' frame than the 'global' frame, as seen, for example, in how the America's Promise Alliance renamed their dropout prevention campaign "Grad Nation" (with the sub-title "end the dropout crisis") in 2010, launching it with 105 "Dropout Prevention Summits" across the country.[31] In these narratives, the framing of 'the global' plays an implicit, complementary role, because the reasons for seeing the 'national dropout issue' as a 'crisis' are often articulated in relation to a perceived reduction of U.S. competitiveness in the 'global economy.' Yet, the 'global' frame is also heavily deployed in relation to other, overlapping narratives of 'crises' of higher education, such as those that offer MOOCs, global campuses, and study abroad as potential 'solutions.' In examining who is marginalized and excluded from these discourses, consider particularly those figures whom are made to appear included while actually being abjected. The most starkly abjected figures of global higher education are those whose labor creates the technologies and consumer goods seen as necessary for the smooth functioning of the 'information revolution' and 'knowledge society' in which higher education plays a central role. For example, workers in Congo and in Chinese factories who make parts for the computers, cell phones, and iPads that are the key tools used by the included global higher education subjects in their high-tech, active learning enabled 'smart classrooms.'[32] Another set of such abject figures of 'global higher education' is the exploited, precarious, migrant workers whose labor builds, maintains, and performs service in, the buildings and campuses of the 'global satellites' of US and European universities, such as

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[31] See "Grad Nation," http://www.americaspromise.org/Our-Work/Grad-Nation.aspx - Accessed 3/12/13.
[32] On 'smart classrooms,' see, for example, the following article about creating them at the University of Minnesota: Jennifer Demski, "Taking Next Gen Classrooms Beyond the Pilot," *Campus Technology,* 2011 http://campustechnology.com/articles/2011/05/25/taking-next-gen-classrooms-beyond-the-pilot.aspx

NYU-Abu Dhabi—in addition to the workers on the home campuses of these universities who have relatively better but still exploited and neo-colonial labor conditions (Ross 2008).

Of course, the institution of higher education, with its elite universities' campuses placed in the territories of so-called 'developed' countries, has *always* been co-constituted with the exploitative extraction of labor and resources from 'developing' countries. Theories of 'underdevelopment' and 'dependency' portray how the creation of institutions and ways of living that Europeans and Americans describe as 'modern' and 'developed' have been premised on forced labor and expropriation of resources through colonialism—creating a devastated quality of life in colonized lands that appears through the lens of Western theories of 'modernization' and 'development' as 'less modern and developed,' while omitting or explaining away the co-constitutive character of these processes (Irogbe 2005; Rodney 1972). An important example of this is the Belgian colonization of the Congo from the 1890s to the 1910s, in which the demand for rubber in the U.S. and Europe—used to spread the key 'modern' technologies of electricity and the car-based regime of automobility—motivated a vast, brutal system of forced labor to extract rubber, leading to the deaths of at least 10 million Congolese and devastating their previously effective modes of self-government (Hochschild 1999). The relations between higher education and colonization in the 'Scramble for Africa' were mutually complementary. In one direction, with growth of higher education in the late 1800s and early 1900s, professional geographers, anthropologists, and other social scientists participated in creating maps, statistics, ethnographic studies, and narratives for guiding and legitimating imperial exploration and colonialism (cf. Asad 1973; Driver 2001;

Moore 1994; Said 1979). In the other direction, the material conditions of electricity and car-based "automobility" were crucial bases for the development of metropolitan university campuses and increased productivity of U.S. and European academics from the early 20th century to the present, which has enabled them to remain hegemonic in the world of higher education.[33]

This history of co-constitution of higher education with its abject, colonized figures and spaces continues in the present with the fundamental materials for the 'information revolution,' such as coltan and other precious metals used in computers and cell phones, extracted from mines through exploited labor in African countries. Through a kind of neoliberal globalization with capital investment that 'hops' from point to point rather than 'flowing' across contiguous spaces, the continent of Africa has been divided into "usable Africa"—in which "spatially segregated, secured enclaves" for mineral extraction are governed with militarized, private and semi-private means, while very little of the profits are invested in wider social programs—and, outside of these enclaves are spaces of "nonusable Africa," which are governed more by warlords and humanitarian NGOs than nation-states (Ferguson 2006, 36-39). Thereby, "specific forms of 'global' integration coexist with specific forms of exclusion, marginalization, and disconnection" (41). Through the commodity chains of mineral resource extraction, and consumer technology production in other countries, especially in Asia, 'global higher education' is integrated with "usable Africa," while simultaneously participating in the production of excluded and marginalized "global shadows" in "nonusable Africa."

[33] On different regimes of "automobility" and on the negative effects of the car-dominated regime, see Böhm et al 2006.

The neoliberal globalization of higher education works on a similar "point to point," "globe-hopping," model as the commodity chains of mineral resource extraction. The enclaves for extraction of oil and coltan share features with global campuses: spatial segregation from the surrounding places, militarized borders, using exploited migrant labor, and having a relatively "socially thin" impact on the wider society (Ferguson 2006; Ross 2008). One key difference is that, while the commodities of precious minerals are extracted in secured enclaves for consumption in other places, the commodity of 'global higher education' is both produced and consumed in 'global campuses.' Yet, the parallel continues when considering that in addition to students' consumption of the commoditized teaching at the campuses, they are themselves produced as commodities, i.e., as degreed graduates, who will hop to some other part of the globe to sell their own labor power. Students from the U.S., Europe, or a wealthy enclave of a 'developing' country hop to the global campus, consume the commodity of higher education, and then hop back to live and work in a rich country or enclave.

The rise of these 'global campuses' and 'globe-hopping' students are indications of both continuity and differences with the shift from 'national' to 'global' discourses of higher education. In the hegemonic discourses of the Keynesian welfare state regime of higher education, 'the global' scale played a role mainly in relations of competition between national higher education systems. With the rise of neoliberalism and the 'edu-deal,' and even more so now with the 'end of the edu-deal,' the imaginary of 'the global' in discourses of higher education becomes linked with neoliberal figures of the student as a 'global entrepreneur' in the 'global economy,' which includes the institutions of higher education themselves, as they compete for 'global rankings' and for attracting students

with tuition dollars and corporations with investment funds from around the world. With the shift from 'national' higher education to a combination of 'national' and 'global' higher education, the norms of inclusivity and accessibility that had been won through struggles on the national level, especially the civil rights movement, undergo fraught transformations. To suppress these tensions, a variety of discourses and institutions perform the work of presenting an appearance of global inclusion while actually perpetuating exclusion and marginalization. Discourses around 'global multiculturalism,' 'global campuses,' 'study abroad,' and MOOCs create these images of higher education covering the globe with cohesion and contiguity, while actually creating merely point to point, 'globe hopping' circuits for neoliberal, "strategic cosmopolitan" entrepreneurs, corporations, and commodities (K. Mitchell 2003; Kamola 2013a). Further, this appearance of 'global coverage' of higher education masks how knowledge about 'the global' is produced mostly by U.S. and Europe-based academics, and how this knowledge tends to serve the interests of their nation-states (Kamola 2013b).

Unlike with the 'dropout' discourse on the national level for framing and stigmatizing school non-completers whose presence remains in direct contact with the 'graduates' in urban areas, no explicit figure is needed for erasing the process of co-constitution with the abjects of higher education on a 'global' level, because "shading and distancing effects" do this erasing already.[34] The limiting conditions for discourses of 'global higher education,' such as MOOCs, to re-code these abject figures as potentially included are reduced through the shading of national borders and the distancing of

[34] I draw the concept of "shading and distancing effects" from Thomas Princen, who uses it to describe the mechanisms that shade and distance consumers from recognizing the socio-environmental impacts of their consumption in global commodity chains, both 'upstream' (towards extraction and production) and 'downstream' (towards disposal) (Princen 2002).

geography, culture, and degrees of agency—e.g., the myriad 'middlemen' in global commodity chains—between the laborers who extract the minerals and manufacture the technology (e.g., computers and cell phones) for consumers on campuses of higher education. Further distancing of consumers of higher education from the implications of their consumption is effected through their fetishizing the commodity of higher education (Manno 2002). Through fantasizing about their subjectification as a 'global entrepreneur' whose identity will take on the 'globally ranked' brand of the university from which they received their degree, they reduce any potential affects of care with the others whose labor is implicated in the history of production of the commodities they used during the process of their education.

In comparison with these global abject figures, on the national and metropolitan levels the bodies of 'dropouts' are physically present and visible in urban places. Thus, in order for the forces of the status quo to suppress recognition of the co-constitution of higher education with these more stubbornly 'local' abject figures, they must deploy a wide range of suppressive techniques that mutually support each other. As the shading and distancing effects of national borders, geography, culture, and degrees of agency are not as readily available as they are with global commodity chains, they are created more locally through spatio-temporal segregation. On the scale of the metropolitan area, segregations along racial, class, linguistic, and educational lines intertwine with each other, effecting striations of relative marginalization and inclusion while enabling mobility of those who are relatively abject figures from higher education to travel to campuses in order to perform exploited labor, e.g., as custodial workers, in a kind of "neo-colonial relationship" (Schwartz-Weinstein 2013). Those who are relatively more

abjected are relegated to spaces of more extreme isolation, particularly prisons, in which a majority of prisoners did not graduate from high school. The populations of prisons have greatly increased over the past 30 years, in the "the New Jim Crow" era of "mass incarceration," becoming places of "social death," even as many prisoners perform hyper-exploited labor to produce goods for governments (Alexander 2010; Cacho 2012). On the scale of the campus, workplaces are built and managed in ways that prevent the different classes of employees and students from having to interact with each other beyond the normal relations for efficient work—e.g., third shifts for custodial workers so that students, faculty, and administrators are prevented from seeing them and interacting with them. Complementing and legitimating this spatio-temporal segregation are stigmatizing discourses such as the 'dropout,' the de-valuing of 'manual labor' in contrast with 'intellectual labor,' racist and classist narratives around 'cultures of poverty and dependency,' and criminalizing various activities of abject populations, such as the 'informal economies' of drugs and sex work.

As on the 'global' level so on the 'local' level, these segregations and stigmatizing discourses are complemented with discourses that give an appearance of inclusivity. The rise of discourses and programs of 'civic and community engagement' on university campuses has paralleled the rise of mass incarceration over the past thirty years. Despite the undoubtedly good intentions of those who push universities to involve their students, teachers, and researchers in 'community engagement' and 'service learning' with their neighboring populations, an effect of the discourses around these programs is to mask the ways in which institutions of higher education, as the pinnacle of the broader education system, is inextricably bound up with the latter's complicity with

mass incarceration via the 'schools-to-prisons pipeline' (Meiners 2007). Except for the very rare exceptions of programs of 'community engagement' that take on an explicitly critical focus on the links between universities, schools, segregation, and prisons, the majority of 'community engagement' serves to produce a veneer of legitimacy around ideals of 'participatory democracy' and 'community' that suppress questioning into those processes of co-constitution.

Concluding the Introduction, Launching the Dissertation

The above account presented the historical and geographical relativity of how 'national' and 'global' frames as well as more 'local' frames, such as 'community,' have been deployed in discourses of higher education over the past fifty years. How these frames are articulated in narrations of the 'crises, problems, and solutions of higher education' depends on their narrators' particular political project, for their particular body-and-place relative contexts. Whether or not narratives of 'crises' are complementary or in conflict with each other, at different constructions of scale, depends on how they are articulated in relation to wider political projects. For example, a movement for resistance to settler colonialism on a national level could complement both movements of anti-capitalist alter-globalization and community resistance to racist policing and prisons, while conflicting with projects of neoliberal capitalism in relation to higher education at *all* of these scales. Taking into account the particularly geographic and historically situated character of knowledge about these controversies over different narrations of the 'crises of higher education' in relation to different political projects, actors engaged in them need to have better ways of understanding and articulating what is

at stake in them. To address this need, my dissertation offers guidance for people who are invested in these controversies to engage with their full complexity while resisting the desire to short-circuit such engagement with simplifying narratives.

Through presenting a schematic historical glimpse into some of the narratives that have been deployed over the past fifty years—from 'the dropout crisis' to 'MOOCs' and a 'return to public higher education'—to obscure and suppress the ways in which higher education is co-constituted with its abject figures and places, this section has sought to demonstrate the extremely complex, tension-riddled character of the challenge of re-imagining and re-composing higher education. The narratives that I have focused upon are not necessarily the most central or representative ones, but rather they are indicative of a general trend. I emphasized how controversies around higher education tend to be continually and systematically buried and explained away through such narratives' simplifying, interconnected, dichotomous discourses—ubiquitous, subtly reductionist moves that, when aggregated together, thoroughly reinforce the status quo. For an antidote to such comfortable discursive escapes that short-circuit more rigorous study, my dissertation develops a theory with a constellation of conceptual tools for helping those engaged in re-composing higher education to dive courageously into the full complexity of its controversies.

Overview of Dissertation Chapters

Chapter 1: Literature Review—Within and Against // With and For

After setting out my dissertation's motivating problematic in this introduction, the first chapter engages with two sub-sets of narratives around the 'crises of higher education': from critical leftists calling for reforms and from radical alternatives to higher education. In order to justify this narrowing of my scope, I identify the embodied experience that motivates simplifying approaches to perceived 'crises of higher education.' As shorthand for describing the internal tensions that a person feels between their desires to change the education system collectively and desires to compete within it as an individual, I call this experience 'the ambivalent educational self.' Considering that narratives of 'crises of higher education' are calls for change, they activate this experience of ambivalence. The embodied feelings of discomfort that it produces are a major motivating factor for getting through the crisis situation as quickly as possible, a path which simplifying narratives appear to offer. As my dissertation seeks to dissuade such simplifying narratives and promote more complex ones, I engage with the existing narratives that tarry with this ambivalence, building up a tolerance for its discomfort, and translating their experiences of the internal tension into questions for collective action. Particularly, I focus on narratives that take critical perspectives on university reform and that present radical alternatives to the institutions of higher education. Yet, I find that these approaches also fall back on simplifications, and thus, I enquire into the limitations that make them do so.

I argue that an overarching problem with these narratives is that they tend to suppress the co-constitutive relations between higher education and its abjects. Critical

university reformers tend to deploy simplifying narratives that include romanticized views of the history of public higher education, and creators of alternative institutions often tell overly demonizing or Manichean versions of such history. As a result, the former tend to promote struggles '*within and against'* the institutions of higher education and the latter promote struggles '*with and for'* those who are excluded and marginalized from them, while both neglect to bring these two struggles together and to grapple with the controversies around the complex tensions between them. Thereby, they reproduce the hegemonic discourses of the higher education system's definition of its boundaries and value practices, rather than troubling this common sense so as to engage with multiple controversies.

A key critique that I develop from reading these approaches against each other is that the critical university reformers tend to remain within the modernist/colonialist assumptions of education. For a more differentiating approach, I offer a distinction between 'regimes of study,' or modes of articulating study, teaching, and knowledge: alternative regimes are posed against the education-based one with its practices of exams and expertise that prepare students for governance. Then, I present an overview of approaches, such as the Black Campus Movement and the 'undercommons,' that hold the sides of the 'within and against' / 'with and for' problematic together in multi-faceted tensions with each other, while engaging questions about how to keep them together for building more powerful movements to resist the education-based regime of study and to expand alternatives. My presentation of the existing literature highlights its shortcomings and, thereby, offers an explanation of both my motivations for having done interviews

with forty participants in contemporary university struggles and my reasons for the particular ways in which I framed the interview questions.

Chapter 2: **Theory for Ambivalent Selves and Decolonial, Abolitionist Study—The Common, Commons, & Undercommons**

As a set-up for my further development of a theory of the 'undercommons,' I highlight the key controversies across the interviews. In opposition to prominent university reformers, my interviewees tended to be critical of appeals to a historical ideal of public higher education, using instead ideals of 'commons' and 'the common' for making critiques of higher education and describing resistant alternatives. Key differences emerge between my interviewees in their critiques of the regime of higher education, their visions of alternative universities, and their relations between the dominant and the alternative. Across these differences, I define a relative split between two groups in which some put more emphasis on the importance of place-based, historically grounded relations with marginal communities, while others have significantly less of such an emphasis. Connecting these controversies, I highlight a key thread of the issue of representation of 'communities,' and I articulate a set of questions that describe different ways of engaging the tensions around the politics of 'communities' in university struggles.

Then, I develop better theoretical 'toys' for elaborating what is at stake in the different sides of the controversies around the problematic of 'within and against' // 'with and for' without simplifying away their complexity. Although some of my interviewees used concepts of 'commons,' 'the common,' and 'undercommons,' they were vague and

inconsistent across their different uses of the concepts. Picking up from their ambiguities and open questions, I draw on more rigorous theories and histories of these concepts, and I elaborate them into a new conceptual framework that is more useful for grappling with the tensions between different approaches to representing the complex relations between 'communities' and the people, places, resources, and regimes of study within and across them. Situating my arguments in relation to wider academic debates, particularly around controversies over the politics of 'community' and 'communication,' my main theoretical contribution is through addressing a systematic confusion in theories of 'the commons' and 'the common.' Most authors tend either to see little difference between these terms, using them interchangeably, or they promote one to the exclusion of the other. By contrast, I develop an argument that demonstrates the importance of using *both* 'the commons' and 'the common' as frames for guiding struggles.

I elaborate a theory of commons and common that describes them as distinct but recursively interrelated concepts. First, I describe 'the common' as the means and product of communication, and see it as having two main aspects: its potentiality as "surplus common" and its actualizations in different forms (Casarino 2008). The surplus of anything can be posited as either surplus value ("living surplus as separation," which is accumulated as capital) or "surplus common" ("living surplus as incorporation," or the common in its potentiality).[35] Second, I argue that one way of positing this distinction for anti-capitalist purposes is to frame actualizations of surplus using the concepts of 'commons' and 'enclosure.' I elaborate the concepts of commons (as relations between

[35] For example, through a particular act of communicating with someone, affective relationships can form that linger beyond that act. Those relationships can be treated as 'surplus value,' such as accumulating them as 'social capital' for self-commodifying careerist purposes. Or they can be treated only as a basis for further communication, i.e., for further conversations in and through the common that create stronger, more expansive affective relationships, etc.

people and things mediated by some human group's value practices) and enclosure (as a relation of separation between people and things that creates the pre-conditions for capitalist relations), describing how narratives that deploy them *can* have performative effects for anti-capitalist purposes. Whether or not they have such effects is an open question, because their communicative circulation, subscription, and enactment takes place in and through the common; thus, the distinction between surplus value and surplus common should be posited again, and repeatedly, in relation to as many instances of communication as possible in these practices.

Finally, I articulate a further approach for recursively engaging commons and common: to distinguish types of commons and to engage with questions—in and through the common—about whether and how the norms of these commons are tied up with, or are in opposition to, enclosure and capitalism. For situations in which the commons of conflicting modes of living (e.g., colonial vs. indigenous, patriarchal vs. matriarchal) overlap with each other in space-time, *'undercommons'* names a concept for describing the tension-ridden situation of the commons of the dominated, marginal mode of living (e.g., the indigenous, the matriarchal). These 'minor' commons are 'under' in at least three senses: being positioned as lower on the dominant hierarchy, requiring movements of subterfuge to stay beneath the surveillance and disciplining of dominant modes of representation, and aiming to subvert or undermine the dominant powers. Different possible demarcations of the commons in these 'under' relations—i.e., defining the norms of the commons in relation to multiple, intersecting forms of oppressions, subversions, and resistances—happen through communication and study in the common.

Chapter 3: From Marronage to Zapatismo—Study in the undercommons of exodus, decoloniality, and abolitionism

The third chapter elaborates the theory from the second chapter, by articulating it in relation to the historical and contemporary oppositions between the education-based regime of study in the modernist/colonial project and alternative regimes of study in the undercommons of movements for abolition, decolonization, and exodus. Generally, I describe, through the historical and contemporary examples of *marronage* and Zapatismo, how practices of exodus, abolitionism, and decolonization can be combined in a way that further elaborates the 'within & against // with & for' problematic, focusing particularly on the role of tensions between different regimes of study. On the one hand, these practices can constitute "imaginal machines" that open up possibilities for radical change (e.g., "freedom dreams" and "decolonial de-linking") (Shukaitis 2009; Kelley 2002; Mignolo 2011), and on the other hand, create communities, in intimate relationships with territories (as 'commons'), through which new relationships form as the bases for alternative, communal modes of association and abolitionist resistances to the dominant, colonialist/modernist institutions. All of these processes include, at their cores, practices of study in the undercommons. On modernist/colonialist assumptions, these alternative regimes of study tend to be ignored and, thereby, their value-making practices tend to be de-legitimated in comparison with modernist education (e.g., arguing for inclusion within liberal-statist institutions of education). In order to counter-act the historical neglect of these practices of study in movements of exodus/decolonization/abolition, I take them—and the ways in which they become recuperated in institutions of the education regime—as focal points of my investigation.

Highlighting hidden histories and imaginal trajectories of this study in the undercommons, I focus on a predecessor of the 'dropout' discourse, 'Maroons,' which was an earlier version of rhetoric used to stigmatize—as 'wild,' 'untamed,' and 'irrational'—those who fled slavery, a dominant institution of the liberal state, and who were the source of many proclaimed crises and state interventions. The discourse around 'Maroons' and '*marronage*' was used to describe the formerly enslaved Africans who not only escaped from slavery but also created their own communities, which enacted forms of the ideals of freedom, equality, justice and democracy that are radically alternative to the forms realized in the liberal, modernist/colonialist, capitalist state. I draw on the history of *marronage* to develop a theory of the ongoing (often suppressed) conflicts between opposing projects of the education-based regime of study in modernity/coloniality and alternative regimes of study in the undercommons, embedded in movements of abolitionism/decolonization/exodus.

In order to counter-act scholars' relative neglect of the political importance of *marronage* for historical and contemporary movements, my account situates them in relation to, and contrast with, the more established abolitionist movement. Particularly, I describe the ways in which such neglect is symptomatic of colonialist/modernist assumptions amongst scholars, such as in Joel Olson's *The Abolition of White Democracy* (2004), an important movement-embedded intellectual work whose project of 'abolition-democracy' I seek to continue and strengthen through supplementing it with intertwined projects of 'decolonial-democracy' and 'decolonial-study.' I draw models for these projects from an analysis of the ways in which *marronage* entailed intertwined practices of resistance, evasion, communication, study, and the creation of, and conflicts over,

different types of commons. I highlight the ways in which retaining the modernist/colonialist ideals, particularly in narratives around education, and their de-valuing discourses, such as around 'waste,' obscure the centrality of alternative regimes of study in such movements.

To conclude this chapter, I examine a contemporary example of decolonial/exodus/abolitionist movements across the Americas, particularly the Zapatistas in Mexico, focusing on the ways in which they incorporate study in the undercommons into their movement. Then, I relate the contemporary and historical narratives through an analysis of two movement-embedded social centers in the US— El Kilombo Intergaláctico in Durham, NC and the Mexican Cultural Center in Santa Ana, CA—that have transnational relationships with the Zapatistas and other movements in Latin America while struggling with the conditions of their places under the continuation of the legacy of white supremacist colonialist, capitalist institutions in the 'new Jim Crow' era. Through interviews with organizers of these social centers, I investigate the ways in which they make places much like maroon communities but with more intentionally structured programming—including free classes, community gardens, cultural gatherings, and solidarity economies—that enable alternative regimes of study for strengthening informal networks of cooperation, fighting neo-colonial gentrification, and subverting colonial-state-capitalist control.

Chapter 4: **EXCO of the Twin Cities—A Free University for Alternative Regimes of Study**

The fourth chapter draws lines from the undercommons of indigenous and maroon communities during colonization and slavery to the contemporary conflicts

between the neo-colonial commons of higher education and the undercommons of marginal communities. I argue that, by seeing these historical and geographic continuities more clearly, we can engage more coherently and powerfully in struggles within and against the dominant universities and their colonial, hetero-patriarchal, white supremacist, capitalist commons, and with and for alternative regimes of study that are embedded in intersecting commons of indigenous, black, chican@, feminist, queer, and working-class informal networks of cooperation. Using this theory, I offer a detailed analysis of a concrete situation of struggles through the lens of a movement-embedded infrastructure for study, Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities (EXCO), that has attempted to walk the '*within and against // with and for'* paths simultaneously to varying extents throughout its history.

In this chapter, I use the theory developed in the earlier chapters as a set of conceptual 'toys'/'tools' with which to reflect on EXCO's accomplishments as well as its failures, drawing lessons for how to organize it and other such free university projects in better ways. Through narrating EXCO's history, mode of functioning, and historical influences, I highlight its organizers' innovative approach to grappling with the tensions between institutions of the education-based regime of study and alternative projects for radical movement-embedded study. EXCO organizers create an infrastructure to support their course facilitators and participants in anticipating and avoiding the infiltration of their commons by the value practices of the dominant institutions, and thus, to subvert the recuperation of the energies that they devote to their common projects. As a constructive critique of EXCO, I highlight its key tensions: between, on the one hand, building affective relationships rooted in, and accountable to, particular community-and-place-

based networks of cooperation and histories of struggle, and on the other hand, coordination and communication within and across these communities in ways that critically break down power hierarchies.

For a more micro-political analysis of these tensions, I draw on my militant co-research in an EXCO class on 'Radical Pedagogy' to investigate how subtle modes of thinking—expectations and dispositions that we acquire through the education-based regime of study and that we carry with us into the rest of our lives—infiltrate activities of aspirationally 'radical' study and pedagogy. In a project that attempts to constitute an alternative regime of study——in which there are no grades, tests, credits, wage labor, tuition, bureaucracy—my co-researchers and I experiment with the different possible modes of association between, on the one hand, various aspirationally 'radical' conditions of time, place, and pedagogy, and on the other hand, the habits and expectations that participants bring into the situation. Grappling with these tensions in the course as a kind of 'playful work,' I focus on four themes: the geo- and body-political situatedness of knowledge, space-time, a/effective relationships, and pedagogy and study. Across these themes, I take up and trouble assumptions of modernity/coloniality—particularly, the dichotomies of representations and reality, space and time, society and nature, individual and collective, and primitive (uneducated) and civilized (educated)—as sources of obstacles we experienced in our class and, more broadly, in projects of alternative regimes of study. Subscribing to these assumptions, and coming to take them for granted, both happens through and serves to legitimate the institutions of the regime of education, or the processes of making people 'ready' for adulthood, work, and governance. As a counter-force, I offer tactics for de-linking from these imaginal

trajectories and composing pedagogical situations of study in the undercommons for decolonial, abolitionist, communal futures. I conclude with an articulation of theoretical guidelines for free universities, such as EXCO, to create an infrastructure for supporting course facilitators to increase their capacities for composing non-and-anti-educational regimes of study in their courses.

Conclusion: Infrastructures for an Alter-University Movement—The Undercommons for Contingent Faculty and Free Universities

The dissertation concludes with a more concrete elaboration of the theory in the form of strategic propositions for movements with relations of 'within and against' / 'with and for' to regimes of study. In order to make the theory more useful for movement participants, I take on questions around who the audience for this theory is and what they could become, which I address through calling for an 'alter-university movement,' both taking inspiration from the alter-globalization movement and seeking to connect them. Differentiating this 'alter-university movement' from neoliberal possibilities as one that promotes regimes of study alternative to the education-based one, I propose that the infrastructure for such a movement should be created by free universities like EXCO. I demonstrate the usefulness of my dissertation's theory for making such differentiations through deploying it in responses to counter-arguments from critics and others who might conflate such free universities with 'free schools' in England, MOOCs, and forces of the casualization of faculty labor in the US, i.e., of creating 'the new faculty majority.'[36] Rather than dismissing concerns about the de-professionalization of contingent faculty, I recommend a way for practitioners of free universities to see contingent faculty as

[36] Approximately 70% of faculty positions in U.S. higher education are contingent, i.e., adjuncts or contract-based, rather than tenure-track (Bousquet 2008). For more info see The New Faculty Majority's website at: http://www.newfacultymajority.info

potential co-participants-in-struggle with whom to build relationships as part of a broader alter-university movement. Rejecting professionalization as reified expertise within the education-based regime, I argue for an alternative kind of professionalization in continually unsettled/ing flows of teaching-knowledge-study, supported with infrastructures of free universities for such an alternative regime of study.

To broaden this movement further, I argue that contingent faculty can build their nascent movement by taking inspiration from the imaginal possibilities that many historical and contemporary movements have articulated in their struggles against their marginalization from institutions of education—against their being treated as 'waste.' Rather than presupposing a subject for this movement, the new subjectivities of the movement compose themselves through practices of collective study in and for the movement. A broader 'alter-university movement' can constitute themselves within and against their being positioned as the 'waste' of the education-based regime of study, as the converse side of their organizing with each other through and for their value practices in alternative regimes of study.

Concluding with several strategic recommendations, I first highlight the potential synergy between free universities and the nascent movement of contingent academics. Considering that one of the main sources of the fears that prevents academics from taking critical, abolitionist perspectives on higher education is the situation of massive precarity experienced in the lower, non-tenure-tracked tier of the two-tiered professoriate, the opportunity for continuing autonomous study that free universities provide could give precarious academics a sense of empowerment. By detaching from the feeling of necessity of submitting to the academic rat race and unsettling their subscription to an

ideal of ‘security’ through tenure, contingent academics could use free universities’ infrastructures for fulfilling their desires to study while building relationships with each other—as well as with others who are marginalized from the institutions of the education regime—for organizing to improve their working, living, and studying conditions within these institutions and to create resistant alternatives.

In order to make free universities into such a thriving infrastructure for an ‘alter-university movement,’ their organizers must re-work their institutions in ways that enable continual study of their projects’ constitutive tensions. To identify limits to this re-working, I give a critique of romanticizing ideals of ‘community,’ ‘commons,’ and ‘education.’ With my theory of conflicting commons, undercommons, and the common, I conclude with several concrete strategies that provide more nuanced guidance for organizers of free universities to create better infrastructures for courses in which participants can grapple with the myriad controversies of their intersecting lives, places, communities, and movements. Mapping out the undercommons relations between the diverse commons—of the dominant universities, of free universities, of marginalized communities, and of decolonial, abolitionist movements—I offer better frames for describing the complex tensions around struggles ‘within and against’ the institutions of the education regime and ‘with and for’ alternative regimes of study.

Chapter 1

Ethical-Political Methodology and Literature Review: 'Within and Against' // 'With and For' Regimes of Study

Narratives of the 'crises of higher education' necessarily make simplifications in some way, for some political purpose, regardless of whether that political purpose is hidden or overt. To quantify the degree of simplification of these different narratives would require positing some purely objective, apolitical standpoint from which to make such an evaluation. Instead, I situate my own narrative in this dissertation as politically committed—i.e., as grounded in my place-and-body particular experiences of having taken sides in struggles around higher education. Yet, in writing this academic text, I also take a step back from deploying a narrative for actors who share my political positions, in order to appeal to a wider audience. To maintain integrity to my political motivations while writing for an audience with different politics, I have developed a new ethical-political methodology. In doing so, I take the relay from critical theorists, such as Marx, the Frankfurt School, and Foucault, who have grappled with tensions around writing theory with self-reflexivity about its origin and its application in contexts of struggle (Geuss 1981; Leonard 1990). But, I also add innovations—in response to my practical engagement with these tensions on the particular terrain of struggles around higher education, as well as in response to my theoretical engagement with new philosophy, particularly from post-structuralists, autonomist Marxists, post-colonial feminists, and post-humanist science studies.

In the Introductory chapter, I presented the examples of narratives around 'dropouts' and 'MOOCs' as indicative of a general trend in how the hegemonic crisis narrations—especially those that are spread by the mainstream media—tend to make a similar set of simplifying moves, acting as mouthpieces for governmental, corporate, and education 'think tank' actors. Building off of my critical accounts of those simplifications, in this chapter I turn my critical lens onto narratives that are more marginalized in public discourses. In the Introduction, I gave a glimpse of one of these narratives in describing how some academics have responded to MOOCs with calls for a renewal of ideals of public higher education. In addition to engaging with the narratives of those who take critical, leftist perspectives on university reform, in this Chapter I also analyze narratives that present radical alternatives to the institutions of higher education. Although such narratives make relatively less of the simplifying moves, they still do so in important ways.

In order to explain why I chose to narrow my inquiry's scope to these more critical and radical narratives, in the first section of this chapter I elaborate my ethical-political methodology. Then, in the second section I give an account of the embodied experience that motivates people to take simplifying approaches to perceived 'crises of higher education.' I theorize this experience as 'the ambivalent educational self,' which describes the internal tensions that a person feels between their critical feelings about the education system—the basis of desires to work collectively for systemic change—and their desires to accept the status quo of the education system, so as to compete and succeed within it as an individual, e.g., as a flexible, "strategic cosmopolitan" in neoliberal times (K. Mitchell 2003). Considering that narratives of 'crises of higher

education' are calls for some kind of change that can resolve the perception of 'crisis,' this experience of ambivalent desires is activated in various ways for people who subscribe to such narratives. Depending on one's positionality in relation to the education system, the activation of such internal tensions will produce varying degrees of discomfort. For whomever experiences such embodied feelings of discomfort, their force is a major motivation to resolve the 'crisis' as swiftly as possible, and hence, they will feel more receptive to simplifying narratives that appear to offer a shorter path of resolution. As my dissertation seeks to militate against such simplifying narratives and enable the diffusion of more critically complex ones, I seek to develop better narratives for tarrying with this discomforting experience of ambivalence and for attempting to transform their experiences into questions and strategies for collective action.

Toward creating such narratives, in the second section I begin by engaging with the relatively marginalized narratives that take critical perspectives on university reform and that present alternatives to the normal institutions of higher education. Observing that they also fall back on simplifications, I analyze the limitations that lead them to do so. All of them tend, in different ways, to suppress the co-constitutive relations between higher education and its abjects—and the histories that they tell are key tools for this suppression. Critical university reformers often deploy historical narratives that romanticize an ideal of public higher education. Conversely, creators of alternative institutions often tell demonizing or Manichean histories of higher education. The former promote struggles '*within and against'* the institutions of higher education, while the latter promote struggles '*with and for'* those who are excluded and marginalized. Both sides tend to neglect to bring these two kinds of struggles together and grapple with the

controversies around the complex tensions between them. The critical university reformers tend to remain within the modernist/colonialist assumptions of education. For a more differentiating approach, I offer a distinction between 'regimes of study,' or modes of articulating study, teaching, and knowledge: alternative regimes of study are realized in some of the 'with and for' approaches, as opposed to the education-based regime with its practices of exams and expertise that prepare students for governance.

To avoid setting up a false dichotomy, I examine some exceptions to this general trend of struggles taking one side or another, such as the Black Campus Movement, which engaged in resistance to the institutions of the education-based regime of study, while deploying alternative regimes of study, to varying extents, as both its means and ends. Building on such important but short-lived historical examples, in order to develop a better theoretical approach to these controversies in the third section of the chapter I draw on theories of 'the undercommons,' which describe practices that bring these 'within and against' // 'with and for' tensions together. As this theory has mostly been created over the past decade, it is only in its nascent stages and requires further articulation for it to become more useful for guiding practices. Thus, I decided to interview contemporary practitioners in struggles around higher education, to see how they are describing their experiences of these tensions. My aim with these interviews and subsequent analysis of them (to be presented in the following Chapter) is to bridge the practical-theoretical gaps between the literature on the tensions of 'undercommons' and practitioners' engagement with those tensions.

An Ethical-Political Methodology for Ambivalent Selves

A recurring theme and normative position throughout this dissertation is a critique of simplifications, which suppress controversies about the world. I use this in the Introduction to frame my problematic in a way that aims to appeal to a wide audience. In applying a critique of simplifications to mainstream narratives given about the 'crises' of higher education, I highlighted six forms of simplifications in those narratives. Yet, in making this initial, entry-point argument, what I did not acknowledge is that I selected those six particular simplifications and neglected others in a way that is itself a kind of simplification, giving my own meta-narrative of problems in higher education. At the same time, I refrained from drawing attention to the selective and political character of my simplifying narrative moves.

At the end of the Introduction, in reading my overview of the rest of the dissertation, it should become obvious that I am writing this from a politically motivated position, as I lead up to stronger political arguments in the later chapters. But, in the beginning, to try to draw in the reader, I convey my arguments using the seemingly less antagonistic language of 'simplifications.' I use this argumentative tactic as a way to find a common ground with the reader despite our potential political differences. Then, assuming that my text has resonated with the reader, I build up my case towards more obviously political arguments. Along the way, I introduce new concepts that I frame as providing some 'better' ways of seeing the world, i.e., new ways of describing the kinds of phenomena to which the initial narratives of 'crises' of higher education were referring. For my reader to become convinced that these are actually *better* ways of seeing the world, I need to engage in a political-ethical methodology for writing the

dissertation that successfully maintains my reader's attention and sense of trust with me as a writer. By admitting here that I have tricked you, the reader, by masking the politically selective character of my narrative in the Introduction, you might feel that I have betrayed your trust, and then, you might feel that this text is no longer worthy of your attention. Acknowledging my breach of your trust here, I will attempt to make reparations—to restore our relationship as mutually trusting reader-author—by offering an elaboration of my political-ethical methodology that describes the perspectives that guided the decisions I have made as a researcher and author.

Following Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, I assume the equality of your, the reader's, intelligence with all other potential readers and with my own (Rancière 1991). Rather than presupposing that the intelligence of those who subscribe to similar political-theoretical frames as my own is greater than the intelligence of those who subscribe to different frames, I reject such a principle of inequality, because it tends to become a self-fulfilling prophecy that produces relations of inequality. Instead, I assume that we are all equally capable of engaging intellectually with the world, and on that assumption, I set out to write my text here as a mediating object through which our intelligences can engage with each other. Yet, if I were to start this text with my political-theoretical arguments, even if I claimed to be presenting them with a presupposition of our equality, the form through which they are presented—an academic dissertation written in the regime of higher education—carries expectations that presuppose inequality between author and reader. Through subscribing to the dominant discourses around education, an author of an academic dissertation is habitually seen as the expert on a subject, presenting to a reader who lacks, and seeks to gain, the expertise of the

author, wherein expertise is seen as commensurate with a measure of intelligence. When this sort of frame of expertise-as-intelligence is combined with a political approach—i.e., when the dissertation's arguments are obviously political—then the only readers who will bear with the author throughout the long course of the dissertation tend to be those who fit into two opposing political poles: either those who already share the political position of the author and seek to gain better theoretical frames for arguing for their position, or those who have a different position and seek to defeat the arguments of the author so that the expertise behind their position can be evaluated as having greater intelligence. Since I am critical of the assumption of expertise-as-intelligence yet realize that this assumption is likely habituated into my readers' expectations, I have to try to grapple with certain tensions between this ideal and reality. My goal is to write this dissertation in a way that is geared towards neither of these poles of possible readers (i.e., those 'totally for' or 'totally against'), but rather for the readers who are situated politically somewhere in between—i.e., as having varying degrees of political-theoretical agreement and disagreement with my position.

As an initial approach to these political-theoretical tensions around author, reader, and text, I suggest a metaphorical distinction for talking about concepts: as either 'toys,' 'tools,' or 'weapons.' Not only do these metaphors help emphasize the materiality of thought, but they also provide distinctions for thinking about the different roles that a concept can play in different situations of thinking, writing, reading, and other forms of communicating. Seeing concepts as 'toys' implies a mode of engaging with them in playful experimentation. Seeing them as 'tools' implies the work of a sustained, more purposeful effort. Seeing them as 'weapons' implies deploying them for a definite

purpose in antagonistic struggle.[37] The latter could be considered a particular kind of 'tool,' one used for destructive purposes. 'Weapons' and 'tools' imply that one has an already defined project that one is fitting the concepts into, while 'toys' are concepts that one is experimenting with in attempts to compose the definition of one's project. Any of these metaphors could be appropriate for describing a concept at different moments in the relations between the author, reader, and text. A concept may appear as a 'tool' from the perspective of the author, while the reader of that author's text may engage with the same concept as a 'toy.'

These metaphors about concepts can help in describing a general ideal that I, as author, set out for the relation between any reader and this text: the ideal imagined trajectory of a reader devoting attention to the text the whole way through, such that they take up my conceptual framework along the way, translate it into their own ways of making sense of their life, and take my political arguments seriously enough that, to the extent that they agree with them, they take them as guidance in their practices, and to the extent that they disagree with them, they engage with me in dialogue, such as by pointing out problems with my arguments or theories. For approximating this ideal, the dominant relation between the reader and the text should be one in which the reader enjoys playing with the concepts as 'toys.' For such a sustainably joyful relationship, the reader must feel pleasurable affects in their reading, which motivate them continually to re-affirm their relation with the text and to desire its continuation, reincorporating the affective surplus of their experience back into this relation rather than allowing it to attach to something beyond the text that carries them off into some other activity. Through aiming

[37] The tensions between these metaphors for different uses of concepts are illustrated well in this quote: "A concept is a brick. It can be used to build a courthouse of reason. Or it can be thrown through the window" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987).

to write in a way that produces conditions for such playful relations between my reader and the text, I can create non-contiguous, temporary space-times of expansively joyful, experimental study that are connected across our activities of writing and reading through the mediator of the text. In my practice of writing such a text, my relation to the concepts varies between and combines work and play, each of which can be joyful experiences in their own ways.[38]

When my reader steps away from the text, perhaps literally putting down the paper or computer or imaginatively disengaging in thought, they might also take on a relation to the concepts as working with 'tools,' or even as 'weapons,' to be deployed in practical situations. Yet, from my perspective as author, the key question for writing my text in a way that approximates the ideal trajectory of the reader-text relationship is: how can I write in a way that makes the reader's disengagements only temporary, and minimally so, such that their memory of the pleasurable, playful experiences with the text remain strong enough to pull them back to the text repeatedly and to read it attentively until its end? One authorial pitfall that would make such disengagements permanent would be for me to present the concepts too quickly as 'tools' for deployment in a particular political project, i.e., before the reader has developed a strong affinity for that political project. Such an attempt to take a shortcut to political agreement between author and reader would foreclose the possibility for the reader to embark on the trajectory of experimental relations with the text, playing with the concepts as they gradually test out

[38] Sometimes, I must treat the concepts as 'tools' that I translate into written language that, ideally, when read will engender playful relations for the reader. Other times, in reading the text from my own perspective as an actor in the world or from the imagined perspectives of my potential readers, I can also have playful relations with the concepts as 'toys.'

whether they find pleasure in imagining the relations of the text's concepts with their other theoretical and practical engagements.

In considering these issues of authorial tactics, another important question is about how the conditions of the particular medium in which I am writing—in this case, an academic dissertation—limit or enable my capacities to write in a way that produces this ideal kind of expansively joyful, playful reader-text relationship. One obvious limiting condition is the norm of writing the dissertation as one monolithic text with a static relationship to any potential audience, rather than, for example, as a series of blog posts that could enable more dynamic, flexible, and dialogical relations between author, text, and readers, and *between* multiple readers. Another major limit is the academic norm of single authorship for dissertations, foreclosing possibilities for dialogical, playful relations between multiple authors in writing the dissertation. My initial presentation, in the Introduction chapter, of my dissertation as having single authorship is another way in which I covertly made simplifications in my narrative. Similarly to hiding the political character of my narrative, my reason for not drawing attention to this simplification was also to aid in pulling in my reader, because speaking with one voice, as an 'I,' is much less complex and potentially confusing for the reader than to speak with multiple voices, as a 'we.' Now, I will problematize the simplifying assumption of single authorship. In reading the 'I' through the lens of dominant discourses, it invokes the image of a unified, whole, individualized self. This simplifies away many controversies that have been important features in the composition of this dissertation, including several intersecting kinds of 'we' behind my 'I': the co-writing of parts of the text with my fellow academics and activists, the collective generation of the text's concepts through conversations in

struggles, the affective relationships that motivated and sustained my capacities to live and work as a graduate student throughout the years of writing the text, the non-human actors—from vegetables and water to bicycles and buildings—that assemble with my body to limit and enable my actions in the world, and the multiple roles I take on in relation to different aspects of my life (e.g., in my academic job vs. in political organizing), which enmesh me in multiple, conflicting relations of subversion to, and complicity with, the processes that I critique in both my academic and political activities.

In my experiences of involvement in struggles around universities, I had many points of crisis in, and rupture from, my subscription to the idea of a unified, whole self, and reflecting on these led me to recognize the multiple forms of the 'we' behind my 'I.' To share a few of these ruptural experiences, I give a brief personal narrative, which previews a more in-depth account, in Chapter 4, of militant co-research with a free university known as Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities (EXCO). I became involved with EXCO tangentially, through struggles at the University of Minnesota (U of M). In the fall of 2007, the U of M's labor union of clerical, technical, and health care workers was going on strike to fight for living wages, and I joined a group of students and faculty organizing actions in solidarity with the strikers. Earlier that year, an unsettling experience—a friend, a grad student in my department, committed suicide—had shaken my loyalty to and identification with the U of M, and had opened me up to empathizing and affiliating with others who were organizing to resist the soul-crushing features of the University. During the strike, we put on protests, occupied a Board of Regents meeting, and held a 4-day hunger strike. Despite our and especially the strikers' passionate efforts, we mostly failed to achieve our goal of pressuring the

administration to give the union a better contract. Yet, we had built such affectively strong relationships through our struggle that we could not bear to let our collective energy dissipate. Instead, we channeled our desires for change into a forum for reflection on the strike and addressing questions about what to do next. One of the presenters at the forum was an organizer of EXCO, which at the time had one central organizing group based out of Macalester College. Seeing resonances between our struggle and the one that had founded their project—a fight against an attempt to implement a more elitist admissions program—some of us decided to join them and to found a new chapter of EXCO at the U of M, as both a means and vision for realizing a free, open, equitable alternative to the existing system of higher education.

This narrative gives a simple account of the place-and-body particular experiences that, upon reflection and generalization—especially through co-writing papers about and for these struggles with some of my fellow participants—gave me reasons for unsubscribing from the concept of the unified, whole self and for seeking alternative ways of describing my experiences that could better grapple with the many forms of 'we' behind the 'I.' One concept that I came to find helpful as a kind of diagnostic device is that of an 'ambivalent self.' Variations of this concept have helped me grapple with the tensions of practicing multiple roles, or 'wearing many hats,' in relation to my academic job, my political organizing, my life of community, family, and friends, and the complex intersections and frictions between them. This has allowed me to find ways to overcome some of the limiting conditions of writing in the academic medium, such that I can continue to write in this medium, but also write in other media that allow for more dialogical, collective, playful study in relation to the extra-academic aspects of my life.

Before diving into an exploration of this concept of the 'ambivalent self' in the subsequent section, I give an account of my ethical-political methodology that guides my multi-pronged authorial approach and allows me to grapple with the limiting and enabling conditions of different media for different audiences.

My ethical-political methodology is centered around the problematic of 'within and against' // 'with and for.' On the one hand, I see my writing as a kind of insurgent mode of political theory—working on a career trajectory *within* the academic sub-discipline of political theory, but writing in subversive modes that push *against* its traditional and normative approaches. On the other hand, my motivations and the concepts that I use are generated from struggles *with* actors seeking radical transformations of, and alternatives to, higher education and the wider political economy, and I intend my writings to be useful *for* those struggles. The sources of these concepts are partly from my own and my comrades' struggles, including those around the U of M and EXCO that I mentioned above, and they are also from the struggles of those contemporary and historical actors whose situations and projects have political affinities with our own. Then, my deployment of these concepts must take multiple forms for the multiple audiences included in my problematic: for participants in struggles outside academia and the institutions of higher education, for those who cross their boundaries, and for those who are more situated institutionally inside academia, most closely my fellow political theorists but also academics in other disciplines who work on overlapping issues. Even within the latter grouping, I must take on a very differentiating approach to writing for different audiences, e.g., considering the wide variation of styles and methodologies that are accepted as the norm in different political theory journals.

The concept of an 'ambivalent self' helps me as a diagnostic device for thinking about ways to grapple with the tensions I face in writing for these different audiences and practicing in these different worlds. A very important consideration regarding these tensions is the role of *affect*—e.g., anger, fear, love, contempt, disgust, pleasure, etc—in mediating the relations between the ambivalent self and the heterogeneous space-time of the university as a multi-sited place in which knowledge gets produced. Rather than romanticizing affect in general, there are different kinds of affects that have different effects in different situations, which could be evaluated as good or bad depending on one's evaluative frame. So, it is important to have an ethical-methodological approach that is attentive to the differential roles of affect. Considering how affect is related with an ambivalent self, circulating affects push subscriptions to different constructions of 'the self,' making and unmaking it in relation to multiple worlds in different ways, creating experiences of tensions. Those multiple worlds are made up of certain affective relationships with people, and with places and other things in the common world. For example, one can have an affective relationship to a university campus or to a university brand. Thinking about the way that affect relates with the ambivalent self for an academic, some affects could pull them to desire to organize with fellow workers with whom they have some kind of positive affective relationships, maybe a sense of solidarity with each other, as a basis for a kind of community of solidarity. These were the kinds of affective relationships that motivated and sustained my engagement in strike support at the U of M, in organizing with EXCO, and in co-writing projects about and for these struggles. So, that could be one side of the tension for an ambivalent self. Another kind of opposing side could be affective relations with a sense of comfort that come from

pleasures that one feels with a kind of secure, salaried lifestyle and with one's own self-identity, branded as having earned a degree from a particular institution with a brand-saturated campus, and being part of networks of relationships with other alumni from that institution and with other colleagues who are also participating in academia.

The ‘ambivalent self’ concept can be use as a ‘tool’ in struggles to highlight the tensions between these different sets of affective relations, which pull the self toward different possible life trajectories—and to make evaluations of what to do about the surplus of affect that one experiences. For example, one can ask oneself whether to re-incorporate this surplus into the relationships from which it came or to channel it in directions of accumulating surplus value, such as by building one’s self-brand for the competition of academic capitalism. The dominant institutions of academia tell academics to choose the latter; the ‘ambivalent self’ concept is a tool for reminding ourselves that we do not have to listen. Thus, I frame this ‘ambivalent self’ concept not as an endpoint to strive for, but as a diagnostic tool for more nuanced guidance in making tactical decisions about affective engagements.

For more elaborate conceptual tools to guide engagements in university struggles and to do research ‘within and against’ // ‘with and for’ in relation to these struggles, I have developed a particular articulation of methodologies. I see these methods as conceptual apparatuses of the same type as other concepts, but in more elaborate forms, i.e., as a more complex assemblage of concepts for guiding practices of research and writing. My approach is to stitch together methods that I have found useful, including: traditional political theory approaches of close textual exegesis, conceptual analysis, and situating theories in their particular historical-geographical contexts, in addition to the

methods of critical genealogy, ethnography, and international political economic analysis. In combining these methods, I also intertwine them with the theoretical-practical framework of the 'within and against' / 'with and for' problematic, using value practices from particular political sides of my motivating struggles as guidance for making decisions about how to combine these methods and theories, and which to draw upon and deploy in different situations of my research and writing. In writing this dissertation, at some points I have made these value practices explicit, while at other times they are more implicit. For example, in the Introduction I leave out any politically motivated explanation for why I used a critical genealogical approach to analyze the history of the 'dropout' discourse and a political economic analysis of its sources and effects in contemporary discourses. By contrast, in Chapter 4, I will be much more open about my political motivations for the methods that I used in researching and writing the chapter on EXCO, giving a narrative of my and my comrades' experiences with organizing EXCO and our desires to work together on a militant co-research project. I articulate our purposes of providing better guidance for our continued engagement with political organizing as well as for others who seek to understand the challenges involved in creating infrastructures for alternative regimes of study in contemporary struggles.

Ambivalent Educational Selves

According to the dominant discourse in the U.S., society is made up of 'good' people—associated with such identities as the citizen, the worker, and the graduate—and 'bad' people, characterized with such stereotypes as the deviant, the criminal, and the

dropout. For the safety of the 'good' people, our society is said to need separate places to put the 'bad' people. When they are younger, in school those stigmatized as 'bad kids'—as failures, troublemakers, delinquents, criminals, etc—are sent to lower tracked courses, detention, or even juvenile hall, and when they grow up, they are sent to prisons (Meiners 2007). Those who are deemed 'good' through the categorizing practices of lower education can be rewarded with admittance to the place where 'good' people go: higher education. Thus, prisons and universities complement each other as two sides of the same coin: the intersecting regimes of white supremacist, neo-colonial, hetero-patriarchal capitalism. Abolitionist movements—at least in their more radical forms—seek to abolish this whole coin. The abolitionist movement has done amazing work in writing critiques of, and organizing for the abolition of, the institutions associated with the 'bad' side of the dichotomy of 'good'/'bad' persons—including prisons, corporal punishment in schools, the schools-to-prisons pipeline, the death penalty, police brutality, and policing generally—as well as on the 'redemptive' intermediaries of the military and work. Yet, the abolitionist movement has written very little on higher education from a critical perspective. Without focusing on the whole coin—i.e., the whole world of institutions that is co-constitutive with the dichotomous discourse of 'good'/'bad' persons—the abolitionist movement continues the circulation of that discourse and remains stuck with the status quo or mere reforms.

When considering an abolitionist critique of universities, academics (including myself) experience an interrelated cluster of fears and anxieties: getting in trouble with our employers, losing status and competitiveness in our discipline, losing comforts attached with our position, or appearing hypocritical. Rather than simply dismissing these

fears as ill-founded or cowardly, I develop a better theory for grappling with the tensions we face, a theory that can enable us to improve writing and organizing around these issues—*within and against* the education system, *with* communities who are excluded and marginalized from that system, and *for* abolitionist, decolonial movements. Part of the *with and for* aspects of this tension-ridden struggle is to recognize that people are engaged in teaching and learning—in *study*—outside of universities, including in prisons, all of the time. Within dominant discourses about education, their study is de-legitimized. Thus, a central question for abolitionist, decolonial movements is about how to connect with and expand everyday autonomous study to combat its suppression, in ways that are useful for movement building.

One of the most obvious obstacles to an abolitionist critique of the education system is peoples' belief in the given contours of educational institutions as taken-for-granted and immutable. To analyze the components of this belief, we can ask the question: what forces stabilize subscriptions to it? For academics who work within higher education, I hypothesize that the main stabilizing forces are those that relate academics' conceptions of the institution in which they work—'the university'—with their conceptions of 'the self.'[39] The dominant practices of education interrelate these conceptions in a kind of reinforcing spiral (virtuously or viciously, depending on your perspective). This imaginary entails, on the one hand, the unified, whole institutions of the education system—particularly, schools and universities—associated with certain spatio-temporal boundaries, evaluative practices for defining the porosity of their boundaries, and authorities empowered to police the boundaries and administer the

[39] I use 'university' in this chapter as a general term to refer to all types of degree-granting institutions of higher education, such as public and private research universities, community colleges, liberal arts colleges, and for-profit colleges and universities.

evaluative practices. In the Introduction, I theorize these abstractions as scaled-down versions of, what Timothy Mitchell calls, "the state effect": "the school effect" and "the university effect" (Mitchell 1999). On the other hand, the educational imaginary includes a whole, unified 'self' that passes through these institutions and, through the practices of education—testing, grading, credits, graduation, admissions, rankings, etc.—takes on its own definitions of its boundaries and its value (in relation to wider evaluative practices in the political economy of the capitalist state).

Considering university actors' acceptance of the taken-for-granted boundaries of the university, these boundaries can take a visible, spatial form with the physical places of university campuses, which academics view everyday as the setting of their workplaces. University actors are complicit in micro-practices that reproduce exclusionary spatio-temporal hierarchies. Relatedly, the boundaries take a temporal form with the regimented timing of semesters, classes, workdays, tenure-clocks, and graduation requirements. Further, the boundaries take on evaluative dimensions with the measurement of students' learning through testing, grades, and credits—as well as the measurement of professors' research and teaching through peer review, student evaluations, etc.—and these measurements partly determine their differential inclusion in, or exclusion from, the various boundaries within and across different levels and institutions of higher education.

As academics pass through the rituals of training, professionalization, and work within higher education, their conceptions of the boundaries of the university become intertwined with those of their 'selves.' To the extent that they treat the university's boundaries as essentially connected with their own personal boundaries, any perceived

threats to the former—which take their most extreme form with revolutionary abolitionist movements—create fears and anxieties for them on an existential level. These fears are produced by many forces (what Bruno Latour calls "individualizing plug ins," using a metaphor from the language of computer software) that affectively, and effectively, shore up academics' subscriptions to a representation of a *unified, isolated* self (Latour 2005). With subscriptions to such a self-conception, when a person is confronted with something affectively negative, they see it as wholly outside of themselves and thus as either none of their concern or as an 'existential threat' to the desire to achieve a sovereign self that pushes them out of their 'comfort zone' and into an 'alarm zone.' Then, the choice of how to deal with the perceived threat is framed as an either/or choice between withdrawing their 'self' from the threat, back into their 'comfort zone,' or attempting to either destroy it or assimilate it.

Of course, there is nothing necessary about viewing 'the self' in this abstract, unified, seamless way. Drawing on neuroscience, we could see representations of the self as composed of the interactions between neurons, as movements of association with myriad other interconnected parts of the heterogeneous human body—machinic assemblages that interconnect trillions of human cells with trillions of cells of other organisms, including the bacteria that collectively weigh as much as the human brain. To de-stabilize taken-for-granted beliefs in the 'self' further, we could consider the continual communications—the material practices of speaking, hearing, listening, gesturing, seeing, touching, writing, reading, etc.—between human bodies that are the circulating bases for constructing any idea of a 'self,' 'subject,' or 'individual.' Forces for subscribing to these alternative representations of the construction of a 'self' could serve,

conversely, for *un*-subscribing from the description of the 'self' as a unified, whole, isolated being. By contrast with experiencing the world through the lens of the latter, subscribing to a representation of a heterogeneously differentiated, post-human and collectively constructed 'self,' when affective forces push a person out of their 'comfort zone' and into a 'discomfort zone,' their definition of 'self' and the wider collectivities (e.g., 'communities') in which their 'self' is embedded are seen as opened to potentials for radical transformation—micro-political crises for tarrying with possible re-definitions of these group formations of 'self' and 'community.'

What would happen if academics tried—not in the usual individualizing mode of the academic capitalist rat race but in the concerted efforts of a broad movement—to unsubscribe from their views of unified, whole selves and to replace them with subscriptions to radically destabilizing alternatives? Of course in taking up this project, I am building on the efforts of post-modern and post-structuralist theorists—such as Butler, Derrida, Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault, and Latour—to thoroughly unsettle the modern self. My dissertation explores the possibility that such efforts could help academics connect better with decolonial, abolitionist movements—and I develop theoretical guidance for how this possibility could be realized in practice. Although I am situating my dissertation in relation to political movements, I do not intend it to be merely a theoretical tool for some pre-defined utopian blueprint. Instead, I see my project as a lab through which to develop theoretical "toys" to be put in play with my fellow movement actors as we experiment with better ways of composing our movements for transforming the world (Harney and Moten 2013, 106).

I write this dissertation with the recognition of my own political position as one that is ambivalent but that also seeks greater clarity and coherence.[40] Similar to everybody else who works in an institution of higher education today, I take on the structural position of a kind of 'ambivalent educational self.'[41] Likewise, in my dissertation I aim to highlight the ambivalences that striate our subjectivities. Multi-fronted conflicts riddle the terrain of higher education, at all scales: from the metropolitan, national, and international conflicts over the allocation of resources for education to the micro-political relationships between students and teachers in a classroom and campus. These conflicts are also articulated within and across my and others' subjectivities—between our desires to improve our work and study conditions collectively with our fellow workers and our desires to survive within the given system by individualizing ourselves in competition for the scarce rewards of professionalization. This ambivalent position is instantiated differently for different positions throughout the university. For workers in the university who are positioned lower in the hierarchical division of labor, survival might mean performing wage labor and obeying bosses so as to make enough financial capital to pay for commodified necessities. For workers positioned higher in the division of labor—and for students who see themselves on an imagined career trajectory of rising higher in the class hierarchy—survival might mean, additionally, accumulating academic and social capital in the form of grades, student

[40] Theory always comes from some place, from some political position. To claim political neutrality in what one writes—a defining move of an ideology (cf. Althusser 1970)—is either to attempt to hide one's political project or, if the claim is made genuinely, to catch oneself in a performative contradiction by effectively supporting the political project of maintaining the status quo.

[41] For this concept of the 'ambivalent educational self,' I am adapting Tim Lensmire's concept of the 'ambivalent white self' (Lensmire 2010). I will elaborate the relations between these kinds of selves, and between whiteness and education more generally, in Chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation.

evaluations, publications, and recommendations that will allow them to increase the value of their labor-power when they commoditize it for sale on the job market.

Not only do our ambivalent structural positions take different forms, but also we have different ways of understanding them, with various degrees of awareness of the tensions from the ambivalence, as our desires are often repressed and bubble beneath the surface of recognition. For those who do have some level of consciousness of these conflicting desires, we take on various political perspectives through the frames of which we see different ways of dealing practically with the tensions between them. Critical perspectives on the university present different lenses through which to view these tensions. To the extent that these perspectives reproduce the taken-for-granted assumptions of the education system, they reduce critical awareness of these tensions. This problem is the spur for two basic questions that motivate my dissertation's path of inquiry:

- In what ways do currently dominant critical approaches to higher education reproduce the universities' individualizing imaginary?
- What alternative approaches could put this common sense in question and, thereby, offer better guidance for grappling with the tensions of the ambivalent educational self?

These questions will be explored in depth through my dissertation, with the guidance of the conceptual apparatus that I am developing for this purpose.

In radical student movements, this intimate politics of grappling with the tensions of ambivalent educational selves has been expressed with the slogan, "we are the

crisis."[42] Although there are multiple ways of interpreting this slogan, one is to see it as an expression of the widespread sense of precarity that students and workers feel at "the end of the edu-deal" without the stability of a guaranteed pathway to a job through higher education (Caffentzis 2010). Without the security of a future career path, one's sense of self becomes susceptible to continual destabilization, a permanent crisis. The phrase, "we are the crisis," affirms this experience of relentless flux in opposition to the continual pressures that people feel to subscribe to stabilizing "subject forms," including heteronormative, majoritarian, and productivist forms (Papadopoulos et al 2008), as well as forms specific to the field of education, such as the 'dropout' and 'graduate.' Affirming one's sense of self as always-already "in crisis" can have the effect of fostering a vigilantly 'self'-abolishing attitude, with a kind of everyday revolutionary ethics of subversion, against such state-like individualizing ways of relating with oneself and others.[43]

Taking the relay from the radical student movement's call to affirm, and tarry with, the crisis within one's sense of 'self,' my dissertation seeks to militate against narratives about the 'crises of higher education' that peddle simplifications laced with comforting images of a whole, unified 'self.' By contrast, in the next section I engage with more complex narratives that reflect upon the experience of the 'ambivalent educational self,' as a basis for translating such embodied experiences into strategies for

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[42] See, for example, "We are the Crisis: the Student Movement and the Coming Decade," http://wearethecrisis.blogspot.com/2009/11/we-are-crisis-student-movement-and.html

[43] This ethos of a critique of intimate state-forms draws on the legacy of a relational anarchist politics developed by Gustav Landauer: "The state is a relationship between human beings, a way by which people relate to one another; and one destroys it by entering into other relationships, by behaving differently to one another." (Landauer 2005 [1910]: 165) This politics has recently been developed further with intersections of anarchism and feminist and queer theory, such as in the work of Jamie Heckert: "I do not want to smash the State, because I know that I am the State sometimes. It's how I survive. I want to let it go as I develop other ways of relating to myself and the world around me. I can't do it on my own. I need help." (Heckert 2011, 173).

collective action. Particularly, I analyze narratives that take critically transformative approaches to university reform and that argue for radically alternative institutions of teaching and learning. Yet, I find these narratives still suffer from a simplifying tendency in their uses of misleading histories and their suppression of the co-constitutive relations between higher education and its abjects. These simplifying moves take the form of a split between, on the one hand, narrators of struggles '*within and against'* the institutions of higher education, and on the other hand, narrators of struggles '*with and for'* those who are excluded and marginalized from them. Despite some important exceptions that I will discuss in the subsequent sections, both sides tend to miss the challenges of combining these struggles and grappling with the controversial, complex tensions between them.

Contemporary Critical Narratives on University Struggles

'Within and Against'

The set of literature to which I am responding is the debate over the 'corporatization' of the university. Most of the literature takes a reformist approach—with occasional militancy and revolutionary ambitions—to struggles *within and against* what they see as the 'corporatizing' university. These authors contend that the contemporary university is now, maybe more than ever, integrated into capitalist circuits of production.[44] Critics of this trend often identify the rapidly expanding administrative

[44] See, for example: Aronowitz 2000; Bousquet 2008; Donoghue 2008; Slaughter and Leslie 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004; Nelson 1997; Nelson 2010; Readings 1996; Nealon 2007; Newfield 2003; Newfield 2008; Washburn 2005.

class as capital's key facilitator in the colonization of higher education.[45] Recent critics have pointed to the systemic issues structuring the university's crises: "the decline of tenure, the reliance on temporary academic laborers, and the emergent power of administration, trustees, and legislators over increasingly disempowered faculty" (Jay 2011, 167). These accounts raise critical questions about education that approximate my own research problematic to various extents. They ask variations of the question, 'how can we struggle better *within and against* the current regime of teaching and learning in the university?' They, however, rarely if ever ask the '*with and for'* part of my problematic. Instead, they tend to take for granted the current regime of teaching and learning as subsumed under the education system, with its processes of marginalization and exclusion that are bound up with capitalism, white supremacy, colonialism, and hetero-patriarchy. For this reason, I call these, generally, reformist approaches to university struggles. To the extent that they challenge capitalism and interconnected regimes of oppression and domination, I see them as relatively more *militant* reformist. In this section, I will examine some of these reformist approaches, and in the following section I will contrast them with some other, more revolutionary approaches that take on the *'with and for*' questions more seriously.

I set out here the main arguments of three recent books along 'within and against' lines. In former AAUP President Cary Nelson's *No University is an Island: Saving Academic Freedom*, he argues that de-professionalization is eroding the faculty's key defenses against the forces of corporatization: academic freedom and shared governance

[45] Stanley Aronowitz, for example, argues that university administrations "have responded to the economic and cultural uncertainties" by "constructing their institutions on the model of the modern corporation" on which universities come to be judged by "how well they deliver knowledge and qualified labor to the corporate economy and how well the administration fulfills the recruitment and funding goals needed to maintain the institution" (Aronowitz 2000, 158).

(Nelson 2010). Those outside the academic discipline who might want to interfere with professors' activities—including administrators, trustees, business leaders, and legislators—do not possess the qualifications to do so legitimately, because they lack the relevant expertise developed through a process of professionalization. This principle is also the basis for shared governance, the responsibility of faculty for governance of areas of the university dealing with knowledge production, including decisions about curricula, degree requirements, hiring, and tenure, while leaving decisions about the university's political-economic functioning to the administrators. With the casualization of academic labor creating a two-tiered faculty with increasingly less at the tenured level, fewer and fewer students have access to the elite faculty, thereby making the university into another tool for perpetuating socio-economic injustices, inequalities, and segregations. Nelson argues that the best defense against academic corporatization is faculty unionization, which can help to raise faculty's consciousness of the distinction between management and labor and to push them to take sides and organize.

The unionization strategy is also promoted by authors who take more radical approaches, such as Marc Bousquet's *How the University Works*, which critiques the rise of the administrative class while also adopting a self-critical view of the faculty, assigning the latter much of the responsibility for corporatization (Bousquet 2008). Against the myth of an academic 'job market' based on principles of supply and demand, Bousquet draws attention to the fact that there are, actually, plenty of jobs but—due to the casualization of academic labor—70% of these are at the part-time, adjunct, and contingent level rather than the secure tenure-track level. This two-tiering of the profession is not the result of market forces but of structural policies intentionally put in

place by both administrators and faculty. The history of these policies can be traced back to the creation of the institution of tenure in the 'Red Scare' of the 1910s, as a compromised form of faculty job security and protection of academic freedom that substituted for faculty unions, at the cost of ceding to administrators political-economic decision-making over the university as a whole (Barrow 1990; Newfield 2003). Besides some marginal efforts of resistance to these policies by the tenured remnant of faculty, such as through the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) and university senates, their resistances have not been taken to any mass-movement or widely effective level. The most serious movement of opposition has come from those on the lower tier of the professoriate, the contingent faculty, who have been organizing themselves into metropolitan-wide unions around the U.S., increasingly so over the past twenty years (Bousquet 2008, Chapter 1; Berry 2005).[46] On an individualized basis, the rhetoric of the 'job market' serves to legitimate the tenure-stream faculty's relatively passive role in movements against the casualization of academic labor. This ideology defines the relations between tenure-stream faculty and both graduate employees and contingent faculty in managerial ways—whereby faculty administer the 'market'—rather than as co-workers, potentially organizing in solidarity with each other (Bousquet 2008, 21). Within the context of this two-tiered economy in academic hiring, Frank Donoghue argues that the notion of the 'market' invidiously leads to a kind of hyper-professionalization that pits job candidates in an endless cycle of increasing expectations (Donoghue 2008). Graduate students take on individual responsibility for a structural

[46] For more information on the contemporary contingent faculty organizing movement, see its main virtual hub of the New Faculty Majority website at http://www.newfacultymajority.info . For recent histories and personal accounts of adjunct working conditions and union organizing, see Berry 2005; Teeuwen and Hantke 2007.

condition, and they misleadingly focus on research while the majority of the new contingent jobs look for instructional skills.

The narrative of the university as a "public good" besieged by corporate capital and its administrative handmaidens is a fairly common way of describing the contemporary state of higher education. While the claim that "the Administration" is directly complicit with the corporatization of higher education carries a lot of weight, these arguments—and the political struggles drawn from them—often ignore the ways in which capital's management of the university has diversified far beyond the administration. Part of the reason that Nelson and other university reformers put so much critical focus on university administrators, while immunizing faculty from critique, is because of their use of a romanticized view of the history of higher education. Appealing to ideals of 'shared governance' and 'academic freedom,' Nelson paints a rosy picture that neglects involvement of faculty in the historical phenomena of 'corporatization' that he criticizes. What Nelson calls "shared governance" more critical authors, such as Christopher Newfield, have called "divided governance," a result of a historical compromise that faculty made with administrators in the early 20th century (Newfield, 2003), although how this story is told matters greatly. It is not the case that only *after* this compromise the university came to be administered by 'experts' while before it wasn't. Rather, in the 19th century the experts who ruled the university were the *faculty*. However, their control was tenuous, leading to the founding of unions, such as the Intercollegiate Socialist Society, and professional associations that worked to resist efforts by business and government leaders to harness and/or neutralize the university's insurgent potentials (Barrow 1990, 206-213). During the Red Scares around World War

I, the latter gained the upper hand as faculty faced threats, firings, blacklistings, and chill effects that repressed the unions and co-opted the professional associations. Under such pressure, resistant faculty were either pushed out of their universities or were forced into a compromise, the most consequential coming in 1916, when the majority of the American Association of University Professors' leadership abandoned unionization and relinquished much of faculty's governing power in exchange for the institutions of tenure and a weak form of academic freedom (Barrow 1990, 219). Under this now ubiquitous system of 'divided governance' faculty retained the power to govern knowledge production, i.e., decisions about curriculum, publishing, hiring, promotion, and firing, but they gave up power to govern the political and economic functions of the university and put this in the hands of an administrative class.

Today, the results of this historical compromise are clear. Although the administration was initially formed as a mere executive power, they have continually taken more and more control over university policy, even as they have masked this through the façade of 'shared governance' in the form of 'consultation' with faculty, student, and university senates who have no power of their own to shape administrative practices. Further effects of this transformation include internal divisions in the role of the faculty themselves, as the current system encourages them to act as "participatory managers" who at once *create* and *implement* the very measures to which they are subject, often in response to mandates set by administrators who remain unaccountable to faculty and staff (Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009).

Nelson's defense of 'shared governance' and 'academic freedom' relies upon a romanticized history of faculty's role in university struggles. Rather than examining the

history of the creation of 'divided governance' and the limited form of academic freedom attendant to it, Nelson's historical account completely omits the existence of a faculty unionization movement in the early 20th century, and he instead makes it seem as if the AAUP were the only entity that was defending faculty from government repression.[47]

By contrast, a small minority of other writers on university struggles, such as Chris Newfield and Marc Bousquet, do draw on a more critical, less romanticizing history of faculty's role in abandoning the unionization path. Accordingly, their more critical historical accounts guide them in making more nuanced analyses of contemporary struggles. For example, Bousquet notes, "the decades of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the successful imposition of Taylorist management practice on aspects of faculty work process. And from this period dates the first self-organizing of the faculty, including the founding of the AAUP and the AFT, both presided over by John Dewey at the time" (Bousquet 2008, 123). Newfield also draws heavily on Clyde Barrow's account of the AAUP's historical compromise (Newfield 2003; Barrow 1990). Yet, despite their more nuanced approaches to history, Bousquet, Newfield, and Barrow's accounts of history include certain romanticizing simplifications as well. In general, their critical lenses are mostly focused on capitalism, and their histories lack an intersectional analysis of how capitalism has intertwined with colonialism, white supremacy, and hetero-patriarchy. This class reductionism leads them to imply that there was some earlier, purer form of higher education that is worth reclaiming—e.g., before changes in

[47] Referring to the AAUP's 1915 "Declaration of Principles on Academic Freedom and Academic Tenure," Nelson says: "At the time, before faculty collective bargaining had arrived on the scene, there was no risk in rejecting the notion that faculty were employees" (Nelson 2010, 2). In the Chapter of his book on "The Future of Faculty Unionization," he begins his history of faculty unions with the 1935 Wagner Act, neglecting both the earlier faculty unionization period and the AAUP's compromise with administration (128).

capitalism pushed business practices, such as Taylorist management, into the university. This appeal to a romanticized ideal is seen very explicitly in the title of Newfield's more recent book: *Unmaking the Public University: The Forty-Year Assault on the Middle Class* (Newfield 2008).

Although Bousquet's more nuanced view guides him to expand the sphere of complicity to include the tenured stratum of faculty, his lingering romanticized history leads him to make the mistake of still focusing his critique too narrowly, i.e., in laying responsibility solely on those who benefit most from this capitalist form of higher education. Increasingly, this system's functioning and the reproduction of its relations depend upon the active participation in management by *every* actor in the university, including those who are most exploited by it—undergraduate and graduate students, non-tenured and adjunct faculty, and staff.[48] Further, by limiting a history and critique to the role of higher education in capitalism, this simplification prevents seeing the ways in which higher education is the top of the pyramid of education system as a whole. From the latter perspective, everybody—however they are included, marginalized, or excluded from higher education—subscribes to an 'ambivalent educational self' in various ways and to varying extents, depending on their positions. The class reductionist approaches to critical university reform tend to fail to provide adequate guidance for the majority of people, because they neglect to examine the ways in which educational practices entail intersections of capitalist exploitation with oppression and domination along the axes of colonialism and white supremacy, as well as patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, etc.

Toward a Decolonial 'Within and Against': Coloniality and Regimes of Study

[48] On 'participatory management' in the university, see Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009.

As a starting point for breaking away from these limitations, critical university narrators need to engage with historical accounts that put into question the modernist assumptions of education, 'unsettling' them through showing how they are tied up with colonialism, both historically and ongoing. Other critical education theorists have made these links between education, modernity, and colonialism as well, especially scholar-practitioners of indigenous resistance to colonialism and of decolonizing knowledges and pedagogies (e.g., Grande 2004; Abdi 2012; Szasz 2007; Prakash and Esteva 2008). On the one hand, education is a fundamental, explicitly promoted concept of modernity—the main institution through which 'individuals' are seen to 'develop' from their 'primitive,' 'dependent' infancy into 'modern,' 'independent' adults. On the other hand, modernity has its hidden "dark side" in colonialism, both historically and contemporarily in the continuation of colonial modes of power and knowledge (Mignolo 2011). Taking a decolonial perspective on the central dichotomies in education discourses, such as 'novice'/'expert' and 'dropout'/'graduate,' I theorize them as, what Walter Mignolo calls, "colonial differences"—similar to those of 'primitive'/'modern,' 'barbaric'/'civilized,' and 'natural'/'social'—that are part of the assumptions of modernity/coloniality used to de-legitimate alternative modes of living. In this section, I highlight the ways in which these assumptions are intertwined with those of education, and I present alternative concepts—particularly, 'regimes of study'—for describing the phenomena associated with those dichotomies and for composing decolonial, communal futures.

The perpetuation of the mini "state effects" of schools and universities depends on modernist, territorial thinking with a "zero point epistemology" that hides its localness while projecting universality (Mitchell 1999; Mignolo 2011). From this zero point, the

colonial differences are mapped out: from the difference of ‘primitive’ vs. ’civilized’ that was, and still is used, to disqualify the ways of knowing and living of non-Western peoples and to legitimize the colonization of their lands, to the difference of ‘educational’ vs. ‘non-educational’ that is used to legitimize the demarcated boundaries of the territories of schools and universities in contrast with their outsides. In education, modernist concepts of ‘space’ and ‘time’ are deployed in the institutional authorities’ determinations of how human bodies should be moved, classified, and managed within and between places of teaching and learning—with stage developmentalism, Taylorism, tracking, etc (Lesko 2001).

On the normal assumptions of education, historically constructed in tandem with the rise of the capitalist, colonialist state, there is a tendency to accept the monopolization of the legitimate means for teaching and learning by professionalized teachers and administrators (Prakash & Esteva, 2008). Educators’ claimed authority over the resources for study is legitimated through these discourses, seeing the ‘developmental stages’ frame of education as an instantiation of the coloniality of knowledge, in which one’s being ‘uneducated’ on a linear understanding of ‘time’ is equated with being ‘behind in time,’ and with the ‘dropout’ as the ‘wild,’ ‘undeveloped’ Other to the ‘graduate.’ These discourses legitimate fixed hierarchical authority relations between teachers and students, boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate forms of knowledge and study, and the teachers’ authoritarian control of the value practices of grades and credits.

For critical movements in struggles around higher education to avoid falling back on the modernist/colonialist concept of ‘education,’ I recommend some conceptual shifts for greater specificity. To preview what I will elaborate further in Chapter 4 (aided

descriptively with my analysis of a course in a free school), I call for a shift from an idea of 'education' tied with a modernist/colonialist view that sees 'space' and 'time' as distinct and that frames them within a dichotomous view of representations vs. the material world, to a decolonial perspective that frames 'space' and 'time' as intertwined and place- and body-embedded. Then, instead of taking the zero-point epistemology of 'education,' I call for shifting to talk about '*study'* in relation to particular embodied, historical, geographic places and for particular purposes. Distinguishing the term 'study' from 'education' and 'teaching and learning,' I define the latter as including activities of study in addition to some other elements, particularly practices of subscribing to the modernist assumptions of 'individuals' who, as students, at the completion of their study can be tested with 'exams' administered by 'individual' teachers who possess 'expertise' and who can commodify their expert knowledge for sale in textbooks and curricula.

To clarify this potentially confusing set of distinctions, I introduce the concept of *regime of study*. By recognizing the historical construction of the currently dominant regime of study in its articulation with modernist/colonial practices of 'education' and 'teaching and learning,' we can open possibilities for understanding alternative regimes of study that are de-linked from modernist/colonial practices and connected instead with decolonial, communal possible futures.

I draw the concept of 'regime of study' from two main sources. First, 'study' comes from Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's notion of study as "not being ready for governance" (Moten & Harney, 2009, p. 160). They describe 'study' as a "relational term," in complementary relations of "a kind of circle of knowledge—teaching—study, as that set of relations that never really leaves prematurity," and also in relations of

opposition to both 'exam' and 'expertise,' which imply the completion of study, as well as in opposition to 'governance' as "a kind of prospecting of mass intellectuality" (p. 170-1).[49]

Second, I draw the 'regime' part of 'regimes of study' from Steffen Böhm et al's theory of "regimes of automobility" in which they argue for their use of "regime" as opposed to "system" because:

> Speaking of a regime allows us not only to emphasize the systemic aspects of automobility but also to bring out the relations of power that make this system possible. At the same time, it attempts to avoid the sense of closure in the notion of system, where its internal relations, feedback mechanisms, create a closed loop reproducing its logics relentlessly. Our intention, then, … is not simply to describe a system of automobility, which might naturalize this system and take it for granted, but to engage in a critique that draws out its political character, its tensions and problems, and the possibilities of moving beyond it. (Böhm et al 2006, 6)

As major parts of their critique are "to question the universality of today's regime of automobility" and to argue that "there are automobilities that do not depend on the car," likewise, I find the "regime" concept useful for arguing that there are regimes of study that do not depend on education and the various technologies entailed within this modernist institution (exams, expertise, particular relations of teaching and learning, etc).

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[49] For my conception of study, I also take inspiration from Tyson Lewis's use of the concept of study as a critique of the 'learning society' of neoliberal capitalist democracy in which the child is viewed "as an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing," thereby sacrificing "our *impotentiality*, our ability *not to be*" (Lewis, 2011b, p. 587). Although I pick up on his turn to the concept of 'study,' I diverge from his conception of it, because he builds some normative element into it, making it an ideal, 'emancipatory' form of study, such as by positing "the radical separation of studying from labor" and instead seeing study as "a form of play," "when we *play with learning*, decoupling learning from instrumental economic usages in relation to entrepreneurship, and thus find within learning an impotent opening to freedom" (p. 595-6). While these normative features are provocative, they make his conception of 'study' too narrow for how I would like to use it, particularly for seeing how practices of study exist in normal education institutions as well as outside them, such as embedded in informal community networks and radical movements.

Rather than assuming the universal and trans-historical inevitability of the education-based regime of study, we can see its historical contingency in relation to other regimes of study that have existed before and along side of it. A critical genealogy of the education-based regime of study can unearth how its particular history is contingent upon its emergence in relation to other historical modes of life, interconnected with particular regimes of power, truth, and subjectivity (inspired by Michel Foucault's call to examine the interrelations between such regimes). The concept of 'education' emerged along with other concepts of modernity, tied with the imaginaries of the so-called 'modern' political-economic system of capitalism, colonialism, the state, and the nature/society dichotomy. Its first uses in French and English were in the 15th century, and in Spanish, "in 1632 Lope de Vega still refers to 'education' as a novelty" (Illich 1977, p. 75). Practices of study—interrelated as regimes in various ways with knowledge, teaching, truth, power, subjectivity, and other processes and practices—could be dated back millions of years, to the birth of human cultures. Study within the institutional situation of schooling are seen emerging at various times in different cultures, such as around 3000 BC in Egypt. In the Western world, practices of study occurred in schools and universities for centuries prior to the birth of the modern concept of 'education,' dating the first universities to the 11th century AD and the first monastic schools to the 6th century AD (Riché 1978). The original sense of 'university' was the totality of a group of students who organized together as a kind of union to study together, manage their own affairs, and protect themselves from the price-gouging activities of the townspeople and teachers (Hearn 2003, 3). Under the education-based regime of study, practices of study become reformulated as a scarce commodity, and knowing becomes further homogenized and

commoditized through textbooks, which were first developed in the mid-16th century, while "knowledge as intellectual property expressed in written text, owned by the individual author and alienable as commodity, was to be found in incipient form as early as in fifteenth-century Venice" (Cope and Kalantzis 2009, 522).

As a way to flesh out this concept of 'regimes of study' further, I contrast my formulation of the concept with that of an influential use of the concept 'study,' from Columbia University Teacher's College Professor, Robbie McClintock's "Toward a Place for Study in a World of Instruction" (McClintock 1971). Although I am with McClintock in highlighting the importance of 'study' in contrast with the usual emphasis on 'teaching and learning' in education, and I sympathize with his call for "manifold efforts … to create various places for study in our world of instruction" (68), I find his approach to be fundamentally flawed for his continual use of a zero-point epistemology, which manifests in his conflation of various regimes of study with education in general. In contrast with my approach of critically examining the historically, geographically, and body-particular ways that any regime of study—such as the education-based regime—is interrelated with particular regimes of truth, power, and subjectivity, McClintock assumes 'education' to be some kind of trans-historical, universal good and, then, works backwards from that assumption to find the "motive force of education" in, not teaching and learning, but "a process of teaching and study" (67). His obliviousness to the particular interrelations of study with these other regimes is symptomatically indicated with his gender-blind use of 'man' throughout the essay, his citing only male, white and Western thinkers, and his neglect to mention anything about colonialism or race—the latter of which is especially striking considering that two years prior to writing his essay,

Black students occupied a building at his Columbia University campus, "Hamilton Hall, placing a cardboard sign on its door proclaiming 'Malcolm X University, Founded 1968 A.D.'" (Rogers 2012, 96).[50]

In contrast with McClintock's simplifying, explanatory project for justifying a presupposed normative ideal of "self-directed study" within the bounds of the education-based regime of study, I take on a descriptive project for asking better questions about complex phenomena, inspired by Moten and Harney's approach to study. Yet, I also deviate slightly from their approach as well, because—deploying my concept of 'regimes of study'—I notice that their conception of study also entails some normative assumptions. This is not to take the positivist argument that they are wrong for including normativity, as if there were some kind of 'objective,' 'zero point' position that would be free of normativity. Rather, I argue that the concept of study that they promote is not a form of study in general but rather a particular regime of study, which is interconnected with particular political positions through its relations with other regimes (of truth, power, subjectivity, political economy, etc). Considering that the form of their writing is aimed for a more popular audience, it makes sense, in some ways, for them to disguise the political character of their concept of study, in order to ease their audience's subscription to the concept without getting into other controversies about its interconnected political assumptions. Yet, doing so also has the disadvantage of making a simplifying move in avoiding the potential benefits of engaging with such controversies (e.g., for inquiring into how their articulation of 'study' can be better deployed for

[50] Without actually using the words 'race' or 'black,' McClintock praises *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and George Jackson's *Soledad Brother* as examples of "self-directed study" by "spokesmen of the dispossessed," but then he implicitly dismisses them and other Black Power struggles as "a resentful, separatist program of self-help" (McClintock 1971, 63-64).

different audiences in different place-body-and-history grounded situations). Thus, in my engagement with the concept of 'study' here for a more academic, specialized audience who (presumably) are already concerned with such controversies, I examine their normative assumptions about the 'regime of study' and compare them with others.

The regime of study that Moten and Harney promote is one in which study is continuous—in which a "kind of circle of knowledge – teaching – study" is caught up in a continually circulating process that "never really leaves prematurity," such that "each time more teaching happens, we realize we're not ready; each time more study happens, we realize we're not ready" (Harney in Moten, Harney, and Bousquet 2009, 171). Although they do not theorize this as a particular 'regime of study,' I think that it helps to call it one, because doing so can distinguish the political vision that they associate with this regime in opposition to, what I call, the education-based regime of study. This analytic frame helps clarify and cohere a set of oppositions that Harney and Moten theorize loosely: the continually circulating relations of study-knowledge-teaching in opposition to exams, expertise, and governance, where each of the latter implies an ending of the former circulation. The education-based regime of study is a particular mode of articulating *all* of these opposing practices together in a way that is complementary to, and interrelated with, the regimes of truth, power, and subjectivity that co-constitute—in historically and geographically variable ways—colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, and hetero-patriarchy.

Harney and Moten's regime of continual study-knowledge-teaching cycles contrasts starkly with the regime of study enabled within the institutions of the pyramidal education system, which entails mechanisms of selection, exclusion, and marginalization.

The lower levels of the pyramid (i.e., primary and secondary education) use extremely limited places of study—regimented with expert teachers and interspersed with exams that test for students' mastery of expert knowledge—to prepare the majority of young people for governance. At higher levels of the pyramid (i.e., post-secondary education and especially graduate education), students are given more expansive space-times of 'autonomy' for study. Yet, there are many limitations on this study. First, the selective mechanisms of the lower levels have 'weeded out' many students who have more subversive impulses and who come from more marginalized backgrounds, preventing them from passing to the higher levels and funneling those who do pass into less 'selective,' more immediately professionalizing forms of higher education, such as community colleges, technical schools, and for-profit colleges, where the space-times for study tend to be just as regimented with exams and expertise-driven teaching as those of the pyramid's base. Second, even the more 'selective' institutions of higher education are thoroughly regimented with exams and governing experts (with a dwindling handful of exceptions of colleges—e.g., Evergreen College—that allow for more student-designed curricula and have teachers who give students narrative feedback on their work instead of graded exams). Third, with these more selective colleges as well as with the higher levels of the pyramid, i.e., graduate and professional schools, the kind of 'autonomy' that the students have in these more expansive spaces of study has already been thoroughly shaped by their passing through years of the education-based regime of study at the lower levels of the pyramid, conforming their habitus to the dominant regimes of truth, power, and subjectivity, such that they have internalized limitations on any potentials for exploring the greater autonomy that they find for study in these places. Related, they face

vast limitations on such exploration from their imagining the possibilities for their lives after graduation, which create forces for instrumentalizing their activities of study in career-orienting, debt-avoiding ways.

Considering the many ways of drawing contrasts between the education-based regime of study—at the various levels of the education pyramid—and Harney and Moten's vision of a regime of continual study, this begs the questions of whether and how these oppositions play out in practice, in different situations. The relationality of their concept of study leaves the threads of many controversies open, such as: 'why study?'; 'study for composing what kind of world?'; and 'what are the geo- and body-politically situated relations of the knowledges with which one studies?' Such investigation could include the limiting and enabling conditions of study for composing a modernist/colonialist world if situated (and potentially recuperated) in capitalist education's disciplinary practices—*or* study for decolonial, abolitionist resistances and for creating alternative, communal worlds.

This line of inquiry about study resonates with Moten and Harney's "undercommons" approach, which asks such questions as "what one's relationship ought to be to a place [the University] which is, on the one hand, a refuge for study, but on the other, an institution that exerts a quite vicious and brutal—however much it is comfortable and gentle—control over study," and questions about how one can "escape *within* that institution," to take up a kind of "refugee status within the University" in "surreptitious underground zones," grappling with questions of selective in/visibility and im/perceptibility through relations of "criminality" and "maroon community" (Moten & Harney 2009, 166). Questions around understanding the complexity of these dynamics

are the motivation for the theory I develop in Chapter 2, and thus I will return to these phenomena in that chapter. As a transition to engaging with this 'undercommons' approach, I conclude my critical engagement with the 'within and against' approaches and present examples of the 'with and for' struggles.

Beyond the 'Within and Against' View on the Education-based Regime of Study

Generally, the systemic flaw that I find with the dominant critical reformist approaches to higher education is that their 'within and against' frame simplifies its scope to focus on higher education, neglecting to widen their critical lens to the broader, pyramidal education-based regime of study. Part of why they take for granted this limited scope, this immunizing of 'education' from critique, is that they frame their diagnoses of the problems—and their proposed solutions—within a discourse beholden to the assumptions of modernist/colonialist, liberal, statist capitalism. Some critics, such as Bousquet and Newfield, break away from certain aspects of this discourse—particularly those tied with capitalism—through their use of Marxist and post-structuralist theories. Yet, they remain wedded to key ontological assumptions of this discourse, including a two-dimensional, individualizing and totalizing view of reality: the "state effect," and its scaled down versions of the 'school effect' and 'university effect,' which I described in the Introduction chapter, and for which I can use the theory from this chapter to describe as key technologies of the education-based regime of study (Mitchell 1999). Other regimes of study can use, and have used, institutions of schools and universities, but these institutions take particular forms under the education-based regime of study, e.g., as seen in the modes of building and managing their campuses and classrooms in ways that are conducive for expert-driven teaching, administering exams, and preparing students for

governance within the capitalist state. The abstraction of 'the university' as a whole, unified object is produced through disciplinary practices of grading, rankings, and other metrics, as well as the branding of particular universities, with which faculty and students desire to associate their 'individualized' selves for the value the brand can offer in marketing themselves in the world of work.

The university effect is also produced through the meta-narratives of "crises of higher education"—such as those deployed by Nelson, Donoghue, Bousquet, Newfield, and other critics of the 'corporatizing U'—that seek to resolve the crisis through creating stabilized, whole, unified objects of the university and higher education, and abstracting these objects from the broader regime of education. Against such circulations of homogenous abstractions, and despite changes that have occurred over the past decades, the university is better seen as a heterogeneous place or 'complex whole', consisting of instructors, staff, maintenance and custodial workers, students, classrooms, libraries, stadiums, laboratories, digital networks, disciplines and administrative offices which exist neither as a simple unity nor as the expression of a singular logic. For more nuanced analyses of the university's crises, it is essential to see the university, and the subjectivities, collectivities, and space-times produced within it, as multiple and differential, so as to recognize the opportunities for critical practices and creative encounters that it continues to offer. Otherwise, critical university analysts' prescriptions of solutions—including defense of academic freedom, tenure, shared governance, and unionization of faculty within and across the tenured and contingent classes—tend to fail to theorize adequately, not only the obstacles to enacting such solutions, but also:

- The ways in which the existing forms of these solutions are often complicit with the problems they seek to address (e.g., trade unions reproducing the bureaucratic, authoritarian, patriarchal state-form within themselves).
- The potentials of other sites and forms of struggle, some of which already exist within the terrain of the university, and some of which exist across and beyond its terrain, particularly movements *with and for* marginal communities that practice their own informal networks of cooperation and regimes of study that are alternative to the education-based one (e.g., the 'universities of prisons' referred to in my epigraph), thereby resisting and subverting capitalist relations at their intersections with other systems of oppression and domination (e.g., struggles against hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, segregation, and the prison-industrial complex).
- Visions of alternative regimes of study, which can highlight these already existing resistances as well as inspire actors to break out of normalized habits, to believe that "another university is possible," to desire its realization, to recognize the obstacles to creating it together, and to implement strategies toward that end.

Thus, in order to avoid reproducing the "university effect"—i.e., circulating the image of the university as an abstract, bounded, unified whole—I describe both the "within" and the "against" of the "within and against" position as *relative* terms. There is no possible position of being either totally inside or outside of the education-based regime of study and the institutions that compose it, but one can be relatively more or less within it and more or less against it. The education-based regime of study is composed of specific institutions with selective mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization, such as

the practices of testing, grading, tracking, tuition, and hierarchies within and across levels. Further, it is composed of people's embodied dispositions to perform those practices, and their modes of performing constructions of truth, subjectivity, and power relations, as well as certain ways of constructing the built environment—e.g., the size and locations of schools and universities in urban planning, and their campuses, buildings, and classrooms—in ways that are conducive to these practices. Although everyone is affected by the education-based regime of study in some way, different people are affected by it (and have capacities to be effective in it) in different ways, which are strongly dependent on class, race, gender, nationality, and sexuality. Some are pushed out, marginalized, or excluded, while some rise through its ranks and have comparatively greater influence and access within it and in the world of work. We all have to live and work in the capitalist, white supremacist, colonial, hetero-patriarchal world, and the education-based regime of study entails some of the main processes in (re)producing the relations of that world.

The "against" is also relative. To the extent that anyone—whether included or excluded—evaluates as negative the consequences of what happens to people who are marginalized from the education-based regime of study (e.g., through devalorization of their knowledge, segregation, unemployment, and the schools-to-prisons pipeline), then that evaluation can give them motivation to take critical perspectives on the whole regime. Yet, for those who subscribe to such a critical perspective, there is no guarantee that they will act on it to make change. The limiting conditions on translating critique into action are especially strong for those who are more embedded within the education system—such as teachers, professors, and tuition paying university students—and who

have continual pressures to favor their quiescent impulses over their resistant impulses. By contrast, those who are marginalized and excluded from these institutions tend to have less such quiescent pressures, while also often having relatively less access and resources for making efforts of resistance. Thus, for the creation and maintenance of any collectively resistant subjects, people who are relatively more 'within' the education system can find some counter-forces to their own limiting conditions on taking positions 'against' it—to unleash their repressed sense of antagonism or to find their missing antagonism—in a complementary approach of 'with and for': that is, by building relationships *with* those who are marginalized from the education-based regime of study and by organizing with them *for* radically transforming that regime and/or abolishing it and replacing it with alternative regimes of study.

'With and For'

By contrast to the above critical reformist approaches, I also draw upon, and respond to, four other approaches that I view as relatively more revolutionary, for their unsettling many of the modernist/colonialist, capitalist assumptions that are associated with the education-based regime of study and for their organizing outside and across the boundaries of the dominant education institutions—*with and for* movements of the communities that are marginalized and excluded from those institutions and that, to varying extents, are enacting alternative regimes of study. These approaches include popular education, free schools, anarchist education, and deschooling.

The first of these is a diverse body of theory and practice known as popular education. Developed by practitioners such as Paulo Freire, as well as institutions,

notably the Highlander School in Tennessee, popular education begins with the recognition that all people already have knowledge and power, and thus creates practices for people to transform their knowledge and power into consciousness and action (Freire, 1968; Horton and Freire, 1990). Expanded by many, such as Augusto Boal, into a series of pedagogical practices and "games," popular education is for movement-based self-education (Boal, 1979). It draws upon the support and infrastructure of people and institutions who as "facilitators," "circle keepers," or "jokers," create transformative space-times for people to figure out how to make their movements more effective, build leadership and capacity, and live out the relationships that they desire. Freire emphasized the importance of dialogue in education, promoting the approach of "*conscientização,*" which "as a process of social introspection and self-reflectivity of researchers, practitioners, and activists invites us to develop a permanent attitude of epistemological and ethical self-vigilance" (Torres, 2007: 245). An example of this approach in the United States is the series of retreats at the Highlander School during the Civil Rights Movement where white people and people of color did everything together and enacted the life of equals, creating a living space as a microcosm of the broader society they were struggling to achieve while developing capacities for engaging in that struggle.

Although popular education approaches take on the question of struggling with and for marginal communities, beyond the dominant institutions of teaching and learning, they often retain some of the main assumptions of the education-based regime of study. They tend to assume that by going outside of the boundaries of the school and the university and building relationships of education-in-struggle with radical social movements, they can escape the bad things about those institutions, but they neglect

some of the parts of the schema of education that they bring with them. Popular educators can present themselves as necessary mediators for progressive social change, neglecting that the construction of mediators "operates as a veil, hiding from the supposedly 'liberated' agents of change their own oppression—the fact that their conscience is still embedded in an oppressive system and thus becomes counter-productive—adding oppression to the oppressed, disabling them while dismissing, denying, or disqualifying the fullness of their initiatives" (Esteva, Prakash, and Stuchul 2008, 97). Hiding behind the masks of care, love, and solidarity, popular educators "legitimize their intervention in the lives of others in order to conscienticize them." Thereby, they hide "the disabling nature of service professions, like education," which is "based on the assumption or presupposition of a lack, a deficiency, a need, that the professional service can best satisfy." For example, one of the key methods of popular education, Freire's "conscientization," is a process that "reifies the need and the outcome: only conscientization can address the need for an improved conscience and consciousness and only education can deliver conscientization" (98). Yet, there is great potential for popular education approaches to overcome these vestiges of the dominant education-based regime of study—particularly, if they can be combined with struggles within and against the education institutions that highlight the limits of those institutions while practicing alternatives to them. A recent example that pushes towards such an approach is from the discipline of Geography with Paul Chatterton's integrating popular education approaches into his undergraduate course on 'Autonomous Geographies,' which inspired students to think critically and cooperatively as they participated in social movements for their class projects (Chatterton, 2008).[51]

[51] For other examples of bringing popular education into the academy, see Crowther et al 2005 and Anna

The second, third, and fourth sets of approaches—free schools, anarchist education, and deschooling or unschooling—share many overlaps with popular education, while also taking on the questions of struggling both 'within and against' and 'with and for,' to varying extents, but with more emphasis on the latter. Under the category of 'free schools,' I include a general set of counter-cultural institutions of teaching and learning, which exhibit, in different ways, attempts to challenge, and create alternatives to, the education-based regime of study. These include free schools, free universities, and experimental colleges from the 1960s, which have overlaps and mutual borrowings with the long tradition of anarchist study projects.

During the 1960s, students around the U.S. established Experimental Colleges and Free Universities to appropriate the resources of their normal universities for expanding types of learning experiences and access to education. In 1971, at the height of the counter-culture movement, there were at least 110 of these projects in existence, but their unstructured organization gave them short lives and they began to die out *en masse* along with the decline of the wider movement, dwindling to four or so remaining today (Lichtman 1973).[52] Connected with this movement were Free Schools that withdrew children from the K-12 public schools, which were seen as part of the "technocracy" that "seeks to discipline and limit experience to make it conform to the routines of the assembly line, the bureaucracy, and procedures dictated by the machine and the clock" (Miller 2002, ix). In contrast, many of the Free Schools—numbering between 400 and 800 from 1967 to 1973—sought to create "personalistic enclaves in which every child,

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Feigenbaum's blog, 'We-thinking the Classroom" - http://wethinkingtheclassroom.wordpress.com .

[52] Those continuing today include Experimental Colleges at Oberlin College, Tufts University, the University of Washington, and the University of California, Davis (see http://oberlinexco.org, http://www.excollege.tufts.edu/, https://depts.washington.edu/asuwxpcl/, http://ecollege.ucdavis.edu/).

every teacher, was free to think, feel, dream, and engage in interactions according to their own authentic needs and passions" (2). However, there was a tension within the Free School movement's praxis between, on the one hand, those, such as Jonathan Kozol, who emphasized the political critique of schooling and remained engaged with social justice focused projects for more urban, racially and economically marginalized young people, and on the other hand, those, such as John Holt, who emphasized the individual student's development of "existential wholeness" (Kozol 1972; Holt 1964; Miller 2002, 56-72).[53] With the decline of the wider counter-cultural movement after the end of U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War in 1973, the Free School and Free University movement also dissipated, which was accelerated by the tension within the movement turning into a split between three camps around three different kinds of collective study projects: 'organic' community-based schools, public alternative schools, and homeschooling (Miller 2002, 130).

In considering the factors that led to this fracturing of the movement, a key problem with the counter-cultural, often rural, free schools was their complicity with a kind of individualization that supported racial inequality and segregation, i.e., the white supremacist features of the education-based regime of study. Kozol criticized them for "running away," abandoning their "obligation to stay here and fight these battles in the cities where there is the greatest need," an obligation made stronger, as "the passive, tranquil, and protected lives white people lead depend on strongly armed police, well-demarcated ghettos" (Kozol 1972, 8-10). Further, Kathleen McConnell argues that the free schoolers—through their deferring to individuals' 'natural' impulses to self-

[53] Kozol has continued to engage in such struggles around public schools up to the present day (see, e.g., Kozol 2005).

realization and their rejecting of the impositions of schooling—were complicit with overtly racist opponents of desegregation, as both devalued the kinds of institutional changes deemed necessary to bring about desegregation (2008, 100).

On the other hand, Kozol's political free schools contributed to the fractioning of the movement in different ways. Despite Kozol's push against the white supremacist aspects of the education-based regime of study through his call for permanent struggle with the public schools, he was quite uncritical of a push for inclusion within that regime, such as with his emphasis on the "importance of learning skills for beating exams, getting into college, etc" (Kozol 1972, 44). Related to this valuing of inclusion within the status quo, he rejects the counter-culture's visions of alternative economies and alternative regimes of study too quickly (e.g., he says that his preferred free schools are "outside the white man's counter-culture"). Part of the converse side to his lacking a vision of a 'beyond' is that he seems to take the separation and pyramidal relationship between lower and higher education as a given, such as in his treating university researchers merely instrumentally to "run interference for the much less influential and much less prestigious Free School people in obtaining government or foundation funds" (98), rather than considering ways that the boundaries between lower and higher education could be broken down and reconfigured (as we see with some contemporary experiments in Free Universities, addressed below).

Overlapping to various extents with the free schools and free universities, the third 'with and for' tradition is anarchist education, which is based around anti-authoritarian learning encounters for the sharing of skills and knowledge. Anarchist education is both a means to create a utopian society and a model of it in microcosm,

what Judith Suissa calls "an experiment in non-hierarchical, communal forms of human interaction where, crucially, alongside a rigorous critique of existing capitalist society, the interpersonal relationships which constitute educational interaction are based on the normative role assigned to the human qualities of benevolence, mutual aid, and social cooperation" (Suissa, 2006: 110). Historical examples include the Escuela Moderna (founded by Francisco Ferrer in Barcelona, 1904-1907) and its American successor, the Ferrer School (New York City and Stelton, NJ, 1911-1953).[54] These have some overlap with the U.S. Free School movement of the long 1960s, for which anarchist educator Paul Goodman was a major influence (Goodman 1960; 1964). Many of their principles continue today in the, at least, thirty free schools (often spelled 'skools') re-emerging in the 1990s and 2000s around the United States, as well as globally.[55] Similarly to the flaws of the counter-cultural free schools of 'the long 1960s,' the contemporary anarchist free skools—while having a relatively more explicit anti-racist, anti-capitalist politics—tend to disengage from struggles with the dominant education institutions and to become self-marginalized in mostly white, activist counter-cultures.

Closely related with the free schools movement are contemporary 'free universities' that often arise from struggles within normal universities, attempt to create autonomous learning spaces within and outside of their campuses, and struggle on their margins to expropriate resources and transform them. Examples include Meine Akademie in Berlin, Really Open University in Leeds, UK, Free University of New

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[54] On the Escuela Moderna and the Ferrer School, see Goldman, 1911, Avrich, 1980, and Suissa, 2006.
[55] For links to currently active free skools see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchistic_free_school. For information on the Toronto Anarchist Free School, see Antliff, 2007 and Stewart, 2010. For an interview with several current free skools (Baltimore Free Skool, East Bay Free Skool, Santa Cruz Free Skool, and Seattle Free Skool), see abaker, 2010. The Occupy movement of 2011 to 2013 has inspired a more recent resurgence of free skools and free universities (e.g., the New York Free University and the Brooklyn Freedom School, among others).

York, the Metropolitan Free University of Rome, and Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities (EXCO).[56] Moreso than the free skools, these autonomous university projects bring together the 'within and against' and 'with and for' struggles, and their participants often grapple with the tensions across them. Because of their engaging this problematic, I make an in-depth analysis of one of these projects, EXCO, in Chapter 4.

The fourth 'with and for' approach, deschooling and unschooling, emerged in intimate relation with the free schools movement of the 'long 1960s.' Its main theorist, Ivan Illich, rejected compulsory education, because he saw how it "creates structural injustice; teaching people to blame themselves for failing to reach its mirage of equality and success" (Prakash and Esteva 2008, 91-92). In its place, he promoted deschooling: "the current search for new educational *funnels* must be reversed into the search for their institutional inverse: educational *webs* which heighten the opportunity for each one to transform each moment of his living into one of learning, sharing, and caring" (Illich 1970, iv-v). Many educational reformers misinterpreted Illich, leading them to try to create alternative forms of schooling, such as alternative public schools and homeschooling. Illich criticized these alternatives because "they cover up the fact that the project of education is fundamentally flawed and indecent" (Prakash and Esteva 2008, 96)—'flawed' because it figures learning as taking place "under the assumption of scarcity in the means which produce it" (Illich 1995, v). He feared that "the disestablishment of the educational church would lead to a fanatical revival of many

[56] For accounts of these free universities, see Noterman and Pusey 2012 on the Really Open University, Kanngieser 2007 on Meine Akadamie, and my interview with Claudia Bernardi on the Free Metropolitan University of Rome (Bernardi 2012). I also have interviewed participants in the Free University of New York and the Really Open University.

forms of degraded, all-encompassing education, making the world into a universal classroom, a global schoolhouse" (iv). Yet, these misinterpretations were based on his own mistake—one that he later acknowledged and recanted—which was that he "called for the disestablishment of schools for the sake of improving education." The more important question became: "why do so many people—even ardent critics of schooling—become addicted to education, as to a drug?" Thereby, Illich's critique of education overlaps with my critique of the education-based regime of study, though I contend that the latter concept provides a more nuanced frame of analysis. Interrelated with the tradition of deschooling, some institutions and movements have continued its rejection of schooling while also creating autonomous initiatives for collective study that go beyond the education-based regime. These include the work of John Holt, Gustavo Esteva, Madhu Suri Prakash, and Matt Hern (with the Purple Thistle Center in Vancouver, BC), among others. These approaches—similar to and overlapping with free schools and anarchist education—have remained marginal to the dominant education institutions and, thus, have hardly realized their revolutionary potential on any broad scale in practice. My dissertation builds off of their insights, while also going beyond their focus on study outside of the institutions of schools and universities, in order to extend their critiques of the education-based regime of study into the heart of struggles over the means for learning *within and against* such institutions.

An Alternative Regime of Study in the Black Campus Movement

The most powerful historical inspiration for my investigation of this problematic is the Black Campus Movement in the U.S. from 1965 to 1972.[57] Although this movement's effects were limited and eventually rolled back in many ways, its participants enacted a regime of study that was alternative to the education-based regime. What they called "Black study" served as both a means and ends for their movement's engagement *within and against* the dominant universities, fighting for the "racial reconstitution" of the "White University" and "Negro University" (i.e., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs)[58]), building relationships of solidarity *with* those who were excluded and marginalized from such institutions, and fighting *for* the creation of a "Black University" with an infrastructure for supporting activities of Black study (Rogers 2012).

Building off of the successes and failures of the civil rights movement, which focused on "*white suasion*"—i.e., "to primarily affect the moral conscious of white America to advance African Americans"—the Black Power Movement (BPM) emerged in the 1960s with a focus on "*black suasion* to develop the moral, cultural, and political consciousness of African Americans toward the necessity of black unity, power, and agency" (Rogers 2012, 67). The BPM's development of these forms of black

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[57] I would like to make a similar and interrelated argument for other campus movements around this time, including those embedded with feminist, queer, Chican@, Indigenous, 3rd World Liberation, and Marxist movements. However, these additions, as well as a deeper engagement with the Black Campus Movement, will have to wait for a post-dissertation continuation of my project, as this line of inquiry came late in my dissertation writing and I have not yet done the necessary research. Thus, for now, my preliminary engagement with this inquiry relies heavily on one source, Ibrahm H. Rogers' majestic work of history, *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (Rogers 2012).

[58] Black campus activists "fought at almost every historically black college and university for a black-dominated, oriented, and radical 'Black University' to replace what they theorized as the white-controlled, Eurocentric, bourgeoisie, accommodationist 'Negro University'" (Rogers 2012, 3).

consciousness, unity, power, and agency took place through black study, occurring in various ways, from informal conversations to more formal study groups. Recognizing the monopoly on the resources for study held by the institutions of the education-based regime of study, especially White Universities and Negro Universities, the BPM created its academic arm with The Black Campus Movement (BCM). An incipient black regime of study *within and against* the campuses of those dominant institutions took many forms through the BCM, including in its early stages in the 1960s:

> Traveling activist-speakers continually praised motivated, challenged, and developed that energy [of the BCM] and student critiques of the academy. Furthermore, through their marathon informal campus discussions, widespread reading, cultural weeks, conferences, and newspapers, black students profoundly developed their own movement ideology and force. (67)[59]

In black campus study groups and other forms of study, students talked about ways to build relationships of solidarity with those who were excluded from their campuses, such as with Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael's challenge on January 16, 1967, "to fourteen hundred Morgan State (MD) students to adopt grassroots altruism. 'Until you begin to help your black brothers in the ghettos, I'll blame you for the rebellions of the past summer and for the ones which will happen this summer.'" (Rogers 2012, 79) As means of inter-connecting and amplifying these study groups, students produced black student newspapers, coordinated visits of students between groups at different campuses, and put on the events of Black Cultural Weeks or Weekends and conferences, such as the "Towards a Black University" conference at Howard in November 1968, as well as (82-

[59] Black study groups in the early 1960s included UHURU in Detroit, the Afro-American Association in the Bay Area (out of which grew the Black Panthers (Murch 2010)), the African American Club at NYU, the Revolutionary Action Movement in Philadelphia, Afro at Harvard, the Amistad Society in Chicago, the Negro Students Association at SF State (which was to become the first known Black Student Union in 1966), and the Students Afro-American Society at Columbia and Barnard, among many others (Rogers 2012, 69-72).

85). The concept of a 'Black University' provided students with "freedom dreams" of what they were fighting for (Kelley 2002), and against, as one student from Fayetteville State, NC, said: this concept "'emerges out of the frustrations of' African Americans 'who recognize that the present institutions of higher learning have no relevance for the total black community'" (84). BCM activists attempted to create the Black University within the White and Negro University, especially with Black Studies Departments and Black Campus Centers. As an example of interconnections between the BCM and the free universities movement that created space-times for study outside of the education-based regime, the concept for the first Black Studies Department arose out of classes that the SF State BSU members were holding in the Experimental College in the fall of 1966, realizing "that students should be receiving credit for courses in their Black Arts and Culture Series," and their desire "quickly metamorphosed into a crusade for a new discipline" (93). The activism of black students around the country led to the institutionalization of Black Studies, such that "by 1970, after the three most scorching years of the movement, nearly one thousand colleges had organized Black Studies courses and more than two hundred had interdepartmental programs or autonomous departments" (154).

Despite the many gains of the BCM, the goal of a "Black University" was realized only fleetingly and sparsely, due to many powerful obstacles, both internal and external to the movement. Not all black students subscribed to the BCM's vision of a "Black University," and in fact only about a quarter to a half of black students participated in the BCM, and of these a minority were radical black nationalists while the majority were moderates, "juggling (and separating) the politico-cultural struggle with

their academic and social lives, while also ideologically juggling radical and liberal thoughts, socialist and capitalist ideas, the desire to work in and outside of the 'system,' protest tactics with negotiations, profound fear and intense courage, higher educational reforms and structural changes, and optimism and pessimism for American institutions" (86). For the more radical students to entice the majority of black students, as well as non-black allies, to support their movement for a Black University, they faced the challenge of pushing the more moderate students to choose the more radical sides of these tensions, which was often catalyzed by a campus or a societal issue or a community or campus tragedy, such as "urban rebellions, assassinations, or an act of harassment on campus, all of which were rampant in the late 1960s" (86).

Even more powerful obstacles came from outside the movement, from the forces with entrenched interests in maintaining the "White and Negro Universities." When African American students entered historically white institutions, the BCM faced white backlash, and this intensified when they started making demands, and even moreso when they followed their demands with militant actions such as occupations of campus buildings (Rogers 2012, 89, 127-130). Despite the BCM's facing serious repression—including police brutality that resulted in the deaths of at least thirteen young African Americans—their organizations' protests had some serious and lasting effects in challenging these institutions', as well as HBCUs', maintenance of the "normalized mask of whiteness," "moralized contraption," "standardization of exclusion," and "ladder altruism" (143, 147-158).

After increased police violence, FBI infiltration exacerbating movement splits, college disciplinary codes, and federal laws criminalizing campus activism led to the

movement's gradual dissipation from 1969 to 1972, not only were they prevented from pushing offensively to realize more demands for a Black University but also they lost power to defend what they had already gained (140-141). The conservative backlash rolled back the BCM's victories, such as their achievement of greater inclusion measured in terms of African-Americans making up 12% of the incoming freshman class in Fall 1974, which came down to a mere 4.9% of the incoming class of 1978 (151). Many parts of the vision of a "Black University" were incorporated into the "racial reconstitution" of higher education, such as the creation of Black Studies departments and diversity policy statements. Yet, "writing a new racial constitution does not mean that constitution has been implemented," as a major effect of the BCM has been to create new contradictions between higher education's professed new ideals and its actual practices that maintain the old ideals (151, 161). With Black Studies departments ghettoized and diversity workers serving more as public relations officers than representatives of "the interests of real diversity," the legacy of the BCM's affirmations of black culture and difference have in many ways become "appropriated and institutionalized by established networks of power" (Rogers 2012, 166; Ferguson 2012). Considering the powerful 'freedom dreams' of the BCM in combination with its challenges of fissures, repression, and co-optation, the question arises of what kind of theory could be useful for rearticulating their dreams today while also creating better ways to grapple with their limiting conditions.

The Undercommons: Within and Against // With and For

Although the BCM provides the strongest example of a movement that has grappled with the tensions from bringing the 'within and against' and the 'with and for' approaches together, to avoid setting up strawman versions of these approaches I must emphasize that most of the historical approaches above also partake in both of these sides to varying degrees. By separating them into these categories, my point is that they *tend* to fall on one side or the other, as a kind of simplifying short-cut around the challenges of continuously grappling with the tension from pursuing both paths simultaneously—and this tension can be unfolded into an infinitely rich cluster of articulated tensions. From its beginnings in study groups to the height of the movement, BCM members were communicating with each other about these tensions and articulating better strategies for approaching them, but as they were pushed by forces of factionalizing, repression, and co-optation, their energies were re-routed from such collective study to focus on strategies for survival and defense, and thereby, they tended toward falling on one side or the other of the approaches.

As a potential antidote to such simplifying short-circuits that break movement actors away from their practices of continual study of the tensions around the 'within and against' / 'with and for' problematic, I turn to the 'undercommons' theory, which provides a set of conceptual toys/tools for unpacking and navigating the tensions—i.e., for those who subscribe to the theory, to increase their capacities for describing the tensions more intensively and extensively. Further, this theory can be articulated in ways that inject the tensions between these sides into questions about constructions of the 'self' that are often held in abeyance in the above approaches. Thereby, it allows for those who

subscribe to this theory to connect these tensions with their own experiences of the 'ambivalent educational self,' so as to facilitate a radicalizing of subjectivities and collectivities through engaging in the praxis of struggles over regimes of study.

For guidance in bringing the '*with and for'* type of critical approach into the heart of '*within and against'* struggles around educational institutions—what autonomist Marxists call a kind of "engaged withdrawal" or "revolutionary exodus" (Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004)—I draw on an approach that attempts to walk these multiple paths while simultaneously asking questions. The approaches of the 'undercommons' take this problematic as their motivating center of theorization. They take on the question of struggling *within and against* the education-based regime of study in the university, and *with and for* movements of marginal communities and their informal networks of cooperation and study. They provide conceptual tools/toys for people—whether they inhabit the university, are excluded from it, or straddle its boundaries—to help them grapple with their questions about the ubiquitous tensions arising from trying to walk these multiple paths at once. This tension-riddled praxis has been theorized most directly as the "undercommons" (Moten & Harney 2004; 2009b; 2013), and in related ways, as the "minor politics" and "infrapolitics" of "nomadic educational machines" (Shukaitis 2009a; 2009b; Thoburn 2003), and as "imperceptible politics" (Papadopoulos et. al. 2008).

Stefano Harney and Fred Moten's theory of "undercommons" engages with the question of how the subversive intellectual can be *in* but not *of* the university, i.e., treating it as a "place of refuge" and a source of resources for subversive projects without becoming co-opted and losing one's ideals in the process of professionalization (Moten

and Harney 2009, 147). Shukaitis calls this dynamic the workings of a "nomadic educational machine"—"an exodus that does not need to leave in order to find a line of flight"—existing as "a diasporic process of knowledge creation within the undercommons," breaking down the normal divisions between spheres of education and life (Shukaitis 2009a, 167, 170). Harney and Moten consider how, under conditions of increasing precaritization, teachers can organize themselves from within those conditions, living for "the beyond of teaching ... allowing subjectivity to be unlawfully overcome by others" (2009, 147). To escape the professionalizing disqualification of the joys of their teaching labor, they can go "with hands full into the underground of the university, into the Undercommons." Along the lines of the recent Italian student movement, the Anomolous Wave's motto, "we won't pay for your crisis," Harney and Moten describe how the university tries to offload its crises onto students, making them "come to see themselves as the problem" (148). The university needs teachers to impose on students this "self-diagnosing" lesson. Yet, this increasingly precaritized "labor upon labor" creates risks for the university, because, "like the colonial police force recruited unwittingly from guerrilla neighborhoods, university labor may harbor refugees, fugitives, renegades, and castaways", who can organize themselves into "maroon communities" (149). The allusion to *marronage*—the practices of fugitive slaves to evade the state while living autonomously—is one that I will take up and theorize in depth in Chapter 3. In response to attempts to disqualify these maroons as "unprofessional," Harney and Moten see these maroons as challenging the terms and conditions in which "professionalism" is defined, and they see the undercommons as a perpetual war in which

the maroons must collectively "problematize themselves, problematize the university, force the university to consider them a problem, a danger."

Shukaitis sees the struggles of the undercommons as taking place all of the time in ostensibly hidden ways, "in the infrapolitical space of what James Scott (1990) and Robin D.G. Kelley (2002) call the 'hidden transcript of resistance,' the space of minor knowledges and experiences that do not seek to become a major or representative form, instead forming tools from discarded refuse and remains" (2009a, 167). In between the hidden and public transcripts, there is a realm of an "infrapolitics of resistance" with what Scott calls "a politics of disguise and anonymity that takes place in public view but is designed to have a double meaning or to shield the identity of the actor" (Scott 1990, 19). The undercommons is not merely a place to hide but also a tool for struggle, a "transformation machine" that enables "a process of subjectivation, or constant becoming, which avoids fixed institutionalization … for the development of radical subjectivity exterior to capital's appropriation without needing necessarily to find a physical exteriority to capital," but rather an exteriority that is "often temporal, intensive, and affective in its nature" (Shukaitis 2009a, 169).

Despite providing some useful guidance for combining reformist and revolutionary practices on the terrain of universities, these undercommons approaches leave unquestioned some key assumptions of the education-based regime of study. They begin to critique the assumptions of education, but their critiques need to be elaborated further in order to become more usefully deployable in the praxis of contemporary struggles (cf. Moten and Harney 2009a; 2010; 2013). Also, the way that the 'undercommons' theory has been articulated so far has been quite schematic and poetic,

and full of abstractions that often give the appearance of explanation while side-stepping the difficult challenge of describing the controversies through practices of collective study. This is an obstacle for providing conceptual tools/toys that people engaged in struggles can put into play as guides for their practices.

So, to elaborate the theory of the undercommons in more practice-guiding ways, in chapter 2 of this dissertation, I will put it into conversation with further theories of the common and commons, with which I aim to facilitate its more widespread use in particular terrains of university struggles. From this concept of 'undercommons,' the problematic of *'within and against' / 'with and for'* emerges as an important one that needs further elucidation. In order to elaborate this theory to make it a more attractive 'toybox' with conceptual 'toys' with which people can play in their struggles around higher education, I am putting it into conversation with further theoretical traditions as well as interviews with theorist-practitioners.

Building Relationships through and for the Undercommons

In order to give some background on how I came to explore this problematic and how I chose my interviewees, I will give a brief account of how these connections emerged from my involvement in struggles around higher education. Not only theoretically but also practically engaging in politics around the University of Minnesota in 2007-2008—a clerical workers' union strike with supporters putting their bodies on the line in a hunger strike, graduate student unionization, and creating an alternative, free and open university—inspired a turn in my academic project to issues of governance, access, and democracy in higher education. Out of these practical concerns, my motivations

emerged to connect with others who took critical perspectives on universities. In addition to engaging in discussions with others who were involved in these organizing ventures (such as through putting on and participating in two 'People's Conferences' around the clerical workers' strike and related issues[60]), I also read books and articles with critiques of universities, and I started writing a paper with one of my co-organizers to try to understand our situation and struggles better (see Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009). I found the existing literature to be somewhat helpful for guiding our practical engagements, but I also found it to be inadequate in some major ways, as would soon become repeatedly evident for me with failures in all of my practical struggles—e.g., the clerical workers union strike failed to achieve the workers' demands, the graduate student unionization effort was taken over by a business union and eventually lost its election bid, and the free university (EXCO) has continually faced issues of being marginal and disconnected from struggles.

In attempts to 'fail better' and to study with others who were engaged in overlapping university struggles, I helped organize three conferences on these issues ('Rethinking the University,' 'Reworking the University,' and 'Beneath the University, the Commons'). Through our discussions at these conferences, we pushed the limits of the existing critical narratives around universities and we began to develop better narratives for guiding our struggles. These conferences were extremely generative—giving birth to many relationships (e.g., a group of anti-capitalist academics, called 'the University Research Group Experiment' (URGE), who collaborate on writing our

[60] For the programs of these conferences, see http://peoplesconference.googlepages.com/ and http://peoplesconference2.googlepages.com/ . For an insightful analysis of the AFSCME strike out of which these conferences emerged, see Amy Pason's "We Are All Workers: A Class Analysis of University Labour Strikes" (Pason 2008).

dissertations about, and for, university struggles), many published articles that elaborated on conference presentations (e.g., Adamson 2009, Downing 2011, Meyerhoff, Johnson, and Braun 2012), and further conversations at other conferences and meetings.[61]

Essentially, we who organized and participated in those conferences felt that all existing approaches to university struggles were inadequate in some way or other. There seemed to be good elements within different approaches, but we were unable to locate any person or body of work that we could point to and say, 'yes, that's the right way to engage in university struggles; they're having successes that way, so let's emulate them.' What seemed to contain promising embryos of success at the time—such as the university occupation movement in New York and California in 2009-2010—quickly lost their momentum due to repression and recuperation. Instead, what my co-organizers of the conferences and I felt, to varying extents, was that a split between approaches limited their potential power, and that nobody had quite figured out how to bridge the split in an enduring, movement-expanding way. Specifically, this split was between, on the one hand, the praxis of militantly reformist and/or revolutionary engagements *within and against* the dominant universities, such as with unionization, labor strikes, student organizing, and movements against corporatization, militarization, and institutional racism and sexism—and, on the other hand, the praxis of radical engagements *with and for* radical movements and marginal communities outside and across the boundaries of

[61] Conversations have continued at the 'We are the University' conference in Toronto (2012), 'Countering Contingency' in Pittsburgh (2013), and 'under/sub-conferences' around university organizing at the American Association of Geographers annual meetings (2009-2013), among various other meetings.

the dominant universities, sometimes involving the creation of new, alternative kinds of universities and other projects of collective study.[62]

We saw that when these two sides were bridged, powerful potentials opened for movements of militant reform and revolution. In practice we saw ways to bring together these sides as including university occupations, militant co-research, and free universities that have an 'engaged withdrawal' relationship with dominant universities (such as the Free Metropolitan University of Rome, Italy, Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities, and the Free University of New York). But, these tended to be very temporary and/or limited in geographic scope and, thus, quite limited in their ability to push the dominant universities to confront their own limits and either to transform radically or become irrelevant.

Given this practical impasse at which we found ourselves, we sought help in understanding the situation by searching for ways of theorizing these practices: some theory developed in and through these practices (e.g., Colectivo Situaciones, Precarias a la Deriva, and Counter-Cartography Collective's writings on militant research – cf. Malo de Molina 2006), but most clearly with the theory of 'undercommons.' In order to bring together the people who were engaged in practices that attempted to bridge these splits (e.g., occupiers from New York and California) and to put them in conversation with the people who were doing this militant research and theorizing of the 'undercommons,' we invited many of them to participate in our third conference, "Beneath the University, the

[62] Note that, in this sentence, 'universities' *was our* central referent for the 'within and against' / 'with and for' problematic. While this was my and most of the other participants' focus during our engagement in these conferences, since then I have come to take a more critical perspective on this limited focus and, accordingly, through the process of writing my dissertation, I have re-articulated the referent as 'the regime of study' and distinguished between the education-based regime and alternatives to it.

Commons," which we framed around these themes and questions of how to bridge the split in practice.[63]

Although there were many productive presentations and discussions at the conference, the follow-through from that conference fell far short of our expectations. Our intention of fleshing out the theory of 'undercommons' in relation to lessons from reflecting on practices—e.g., of militant research, university occupations, and free universities—happened somewhat, but no coherent document or theory emerged from the conversations. The only collectively written document that came out of it was a manifesto around student debt and debt more generally (the "Call for Action Against Debt").[64] Although this has led to 'strike debt' organizing, this organizing has been more in relation to a particular issue (debt) and it has not been clearly articulated with the more broadly strategic problematic—of combining the *within and against* and *with and for* approaches—around which the conference was supposed to be organized.[65] The

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[63] For an explanation of how we framed this conference in relation to these questions, as well as a narrative connecting the three conferences, see http://beneaththeu.org/Beneath_the_University/history.html. Many of the presentations and discussions were filmed and can be viewed on the website. The title of the conference was an allusion to the theory of 'undercommons' as well as to the slogan of 'beneath the paving stones, the beach,' painted on walls during the May 1968 Parisian uprising, which started with student occupations of universities and included protesters digging up paving stones to throw at the police.

[64] This was a call for "a debt abolition network to organize a global day of action against student debt." – Edu-factory collective, http://www.edu-factory.org/edu15/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=356 . Such student debt organizing has ramped up since the start of the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement in September 2011 and continues in the summer of 2012 with such groups as Strike Debt, which hosts Strike Debt Assemblies in Washington Square Park, NYC, every Sunday, and which greatly influenced the framing of OWS's one year anniversary celebration and protests on September 17, 2012, and which has started a new phase of the movement in November 2012 with The Rolling Jubilee. Other groups include Occupy Student Debt, which collects testimonies about the painful pressures of living under student debt, and the Occupy Student Debt Campaign, which is a petition for student debt refusal.

[65] Some organizers, such as with Strike Debt, The Rolling Jubilee, and Tidal: Occupy Theory, are attempting to make links between debt and broader strategic issues. I aim to align my dissertation with these attempts. For example, see the Debt Resistors Operations Manual - which connects resistances to different kinds of debt (credit card, housing, medical, student, etc.) and also begins to link resistance to commercial debt with affirmation of other kinds of debts: "To the financial establishment of the world, we have only one thing to say: We owe you nothing. To our friends, our families, our communities, to humanity and to the natural world that makes our lives possible, we owe you everything. Every dollar we

organizing around student debt has also tended to take for granted the education-based regime of study, as seen in their calling for a return to a romanticized ideal of 'free' and 'public' higher education while neglecting the ways in which this ideal has always been bound up with colonialism, white supremacy, capitalism, and hetero-patriarchy.

Despite failing to produce a coherent vision and strategy for 'undercommons' struggles, what has come out of those conversations at the 'Beneath the U' conference's face-to-face meetings is a set of affective relationships between people. My dissertation builds on these relationships, continuing our conversations through interviewing the people whom I met at these meetings—as well as others whom I met indirectly through those relationships, such as meetings at other conferences and from recommendations of people in their own informal networks of cooperation. Towards the goal of developing concepts for articulating more coherent narratives about university struggles around the problematic of *within & against // with & for*, I decided to interview many of those people—taking the relay from the study that we engaged in at the conferences and other discussions. I have conducted 37 such interviews (of approximately one to two hours, video-recorded), and drawing on my transcriptions of them, in this dissertation, I develop a theory that allows me to elaborate on our critiques of the existing militant reformist and revolutionary approaches to the university.

In my introductory chapter, I presented a critique of the use of frames of the 'national' and the 'global' in simplifying narratives of the 'crises of higher education.' In my first chapter, I extended this critique through an analysis of how seemingly more

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take from a fraudulent subprime mortgage speculator, every dollar we withhold from the collection agency is a tiny piece of our own lives and freedom that we can give back to our communities, to those we love and we respect. These are acts of debt resistance, which come in many other forms as well: fighting for free education and healthcare, defending a foreclosed home, demanding higher wages and providing mutual aid." (Strike Debt 2012, 2)

critical narratives still deploy simplifying devices through their use of scaled down versions of the 'state effect,' reproducing the given boundaries and authority relations of 'the university' and 'the school,' which led them to be split across the two sides of the 'within and against' // 'with and for' problematic. By highlighting movements, such as the Black Campus Movement, that have brought together these approaches and grappled with their tensions, the conflicts they drew between their visions and practices of alternatives to the education-based regime of study, such as the Black University and Black study, I began to reveal the many controversies that the dominant, simplifying narratives about higher education usually suppress. In the next chapter, I draw out the controversies between my interviewees over their different critiques of the university and the education-based regime of study. To address these controversies better, I compose a new conceptual framework—with 'the common,' 'commons' (different types of them), 'enclosure,' and 'undercommons'—as a guide for more nuanced views of the rich complexity involved in struggles over higher education.

Chapter 2

Theory for Ambivalent Selves & Decolonial, Abolitionist Study: The Common, Commons, & Undercommons

Unlike the dominant narratives around the 'crises of higher education,' most of my interviewees took critical perspectives on romanticizing an ideal of public higher education, and they instead offer alternative visions of universities. Yet, they have many disagreements about how to imagine these alternatives, in relation to their drawing on different radical movement traditions and situating themselves differently in geo-and-body specific contexts of struggle. To reflect on and generalize from the main controversies across them in the first section of this Chapter, I translate them into the form of questions, particularly around the politics of representations of the 'university' and 'community.' Yet, my revealing of these controversies is merely a beginning for understanding how to approach and grapple with them in practice.

Through my analysis of the interviews, I find that we have many open questions about how to proceed on our multiply ambivalent paths. Considering the hegemony of simplifying assumptions within our ways of discussing higher education—as if we were fish who have lived our whole lives in water and now seek to evolve into air-breathing beings—to address these questions without falling back on our comfortable assumptions, we must devise a new framework for understanding them in their full complexity. If we were to seek guidance on how to approach these questions from the dominant narratives about the 'crises of higher education,' our inquiry would hit a wall of simplifications that would make our questions seem to be irrelevant, unintelligible, or a 'waste of time.' Yet, with our sense of 'self' continually unsettled through our engagement in struggles, and with our connecting with each other in and through the critical, resistant sides of our

‘ambivalent educational selves,’ collectively we can muster the courage to ask questions that are inconvenient for the dominant narratives. Taking motivation from practitioners’ collective desire for new discursive resources, in this chapter I compose a constellation of concepts as a guide for better, more nuanced articulations of these questions—to understand the rich complexity of the struggles over higher education.

The rest of the chapter offers a conceptual basis for such a new framework. The theory that I present—interweaving concepts of ‘the common,’ ‘commons’ (different types of them), ‘enclosure,’ and ‘undercommons’—provides rehabilitation for addictions to simplifying narratives about higher education, because it composes tools/toys for describing the complexity of the tensions involved in bringing together struggles of ‘within and against’ and ‘with and for.’ Particularly, it does away with certain reductionist assumptions that tend to appear in these narratives. The theory offered in each section is intended to break down simplifying assumptions and provide a better way to engage with the complexity of the controversies.

In opposition to the simplifying dichotomy of a split between ‘material’ and ’immaterial’ worlds or between ‘representations’ and ’represented reality,’ I bring together the concepts of ‘the common’ and ‘commons’ to provide a way of describing the materiality of processes that are often thought of as ‘immaterial,’ including communication, ideas, language, representations, and values. I theorize ‘the common’ as the means and product of communication, and I see the surplus of anything as being capable of being posited either as ‘surplus value’ (framing the surplus’s potential as becoming accumulated in the form of capital) or as ‘surplus common’ (framing its potential as becoming re-circulated in the world as the basis for continued

communication). I argue that one way of positing this distinction and, then, actualizing the surplus common for anti-capitalist purposes is to frame it using concepts of 'commons' and 'enclosure.' The latter two concepts provide a way to militate against another prevalent simplifying assumption: the dichotomy between 'nature' and 'society,' which is one of, what Walter Mignolo calls, the key "colonial differences" that serves to legitimate the project of "modernity/coloniality" (Mignolo 2011). Against this dichotomy that simplifies the world into two pre-set containers, I elaborate concepts useful for describing processes that cut across them. On the one hand, 'commons' are relations between people and things—including relations with human bodies and so-called 'resources,' such as forests, soil, and water that are often boxed into the category of 'nature'—mediated by some human group's value practices. On the other hand, 'enclosure,' is a relation of separation between people and things that creates the pre-conditions for capitalist relations. Then, relating these concepts with 'the common,' I describe how the communication used to (re)produce both the commons (regulating them and negotiating their value practices) and enclosure (legitimizing the destruction of commons and the creation of relations of separation, such as narratives of 'waste' that devalue the commons) takes place in and through the common. Further, deploying narratives with concepts of 'commons' and 'enclosure' *can* have performative effects for anti-capitalist purposes, but whether or not they have such effects is an open question. Their communicative circulation, subscription, and enactment take place in and through the common. Thus, for anti-capitalist purposes, the distinction between surplus value and surplus common should be posited again, and repeatedly, in relation to as many instances of communication as possible in these practices.

Finally, I seek to overcome a typical simplifying approach amongst anti-capitalists: a class reductionism that elevates the importance of struggles against the class hierarchies of capitalism over struggles against all other kinds of regimes of domination, oppression, and exploitation. To go beyond this simplification, I note that it is often accompanied with a focus on commons that treats them, in opposition to enclosure, as an unalloyed good. By contrast, I de-romanticize the commons, highlighting ways in which they can be bound up with systems of oppression. To theorize a recursive relationship between 'commons' and 'the common,' I argue for distinguishing types of commons (e.g., colonial vs. indigenous commons) and for engaging with questions—in and through the common—about whether and how the norms of these commons are tied up with, or are in opposition to, enclosure and capitalism. For situations in which the commons of conflicting modes of living (e.g., colonial vs. indigenous, patriarchal vs. matriarchal) overlap with each other in space-time, *'undercommons'* names a concept for describing the tension-ridden situation of the commons of the dominated, minor mode of living (e.g., the indigenous, the matriarchal), including selectively evasive movements 'under' the dominant modes of representation. Practices of study in the undercommons allow minor actors to navigate these tensions collectively, and build movements of resistance and subversion against the dominant regimes.

Militant Co-Research and/or the Education-Based Regime of Study

The 'and/or' in this sub-title indicates an aspect of my 'ambivalent educational self' in relation to this dissertation and, generalizing, for anyone who attempts to perform research within the academy from perspectives that are critical of the education-based

regime of study—i.e., the academy's fundamental conditions of existence. I write 'and/or' here because I want to highlight that this ambivalence is unresolved for me, and to affirm its irresolution as an important condition for engagement in radical struggles around higher education. Writing the dissertation has not enabled me to find solutions to my motivating questions, but it has helped me re-articulate those questions in better ways for grappling with the tensions that I experienced in practice. These 'better ways' include opening up further questions by taking more nuanced views of the tensions' complexities. The 'and' part of my 'and/or' indicates the addition of these questions—i.e., articulating and combining more questions about the tensions between taking stances of critical militancy ('against') and being situated in various ways 'within' the education-based regime of study. The 'or' points beyond these internal positions, to the 'with and for' of my problematic—and to possibilities for enacting regimes of study that are alternative to the education-based one.

Such alternative regimes of study are not only 'freedom dreams' but have been the actual basis for much of the communication that has formed the backbone for my dissertation research. Throughout, I have been wrestling with the question of what research should look like in a regime of study that is alternative to the education-based one. Further, considering this question in relation to my ambivalent educational self, I have reflected on how such research should be conducted with, and presented for, an audience that is also made up of ambivalent educational selves—i.e., who desire alternative regimes of study and participate in them to varying extents, but whose lives are bound up within the institutions of the education-based regime. Much of the complexity of these questions involves issues of audience and communicative partners. In

my earlier attempts to grapple with these questions, I had insufficiently distinguished the different possible audiences for my writing and my different possible purposes for and modes of communicating with them. Initially, I tried to take a short-cut around engaging with these complexities by writing one document, my dissertation, for multiple audiences at once. I'll call this an attempt, simultaneously, to write a dissertation in the mode of 'Academia 1.0'—i.e., writing parts of the text for an academic audience—and other parts of the same text for an audience of militant participants in university struggles, whether academics or not. This attempt led me continually to bump up against inconsistencies and contradictions in my writing's audience, purposes, form, and content (e.g., having either ambiguous or multiple but contradictory formulations of my dissertation's main problematic that were geared for those multiple audiences).

As an antidote, I have learned through recognizing these tensions throughout the research process, and theorizing these tensions (particularly, with concepts of the 'ambivalent university self' and different 'regimes of study') as the basis for developing a new approach: what I loosely theorize as a combination of militant co-research with 'Academia 2.0.'[66] While the former was discussed in the previous chapter, Academia 2.0 refers to new modes of academic communication that have been emerging as academics engage more with the rise of social media, blogs, and other web-based technologies. These approaches provide alternatives to the reliance on the publishing industry, entwined with the entrenched hierarchies of expertise, and the competitive two-tiered system of the professoriate that make up much of "academic capitalism" (Slaughter and

[66] For my view of "militant co-research," I draw on Malo de Molina 2006, Sangtin Writers and Nagar 2006, Chatterton 2008, Papadopolous et al 2008, Kanuga 2009, and Shukaitis 2011. Although I aspire to practice the different ideals of militant co-research that are explored in these works, my actual practices in this dissertation project have only approximated them in very limited aspects, partly because I had not known about them when I began the project and only came to learn about them through its process.

Leslie 1997; Slaughter and Rhoades 2004). Yet, although they create ruptures from the established modes of academic capitalism and create potentials for alternatives to it, capitalism thrives precisely by harnessing the labor that creates such innovative ruptures and recuperating it into its own value practices—subsuming the "cairological time" of academic creativity into the homogenizing time of capitalist accumulation (Meyerhoff, Johnson, and Braun 2012). Thus, these ruptures tend not to escape capitalism but instead to merely create the grounds for new, intensified forms of it, i.e., Academic Capitalism 2.0.[67]

Against such recuperation, to take advantage of these ruptural potentials for anti-capitalist purposes requires combining the new approaches of Academia 2.0 with an intentionally anti-capitalist, militant co-research approach. This combination offers a more useful way for engaging with multiple communicative partners, for multiple purposes, in multiple forms, on parallel channels of interaction in heterogenous space-time, with messy, feedback-looping intersections between them. My first experiment with this combined approach has been to write my dissertation while creating the web-based project as an alternative, collaborative way to produce and present the interviews and other writings related to my dissertation. The website and associated social media have allowed for greater audience engagement with my research, and greater communication

[67] An example of such Academic Capitalism 2.0 is that publishers now offload much of their costs of publicity for books by relying on academics to act as self-entrepreneurs, using their 'personal' Facebook and Twitter social networks to advertize their work, in order to get it assigned in classes, cited, and put into libraries, while trying to draw on the affective relationships built with their friends to disguise the capitalistic character of such self-promotion. For an insightful critique of uses of "digital humanities" for self-entrepreneurialism, see Mimi Thi Nguyen's "Against Efficiency Machines" http://threadandcircuits.wordpress.com/2013/09/09/against-efficiency-machines/

with my research subjects, than I would have had by merely analyzing their interviews as 'data' for the dissertation.[68]

On the Academia 1.0 approach, I would merely write my dissertation for the education-based regime of study, as preparation for governance within the political science discipline and wider academic institutions, as well as for governing others as an 'expert,' certified with a PhD to write and administer exams. Recognizing my situation as an ambivalent educational self, I must perform some of this in order to survive through maintaining a job in academia. But, my approach of militant co-research plus Academia 2.0 allows me to continue grappling with these tensions *in conversation and study with others* who are grappling with them as well, as ambivalent educational selves in their own geo-and-body particular situations. The web-based part of the project has provided a means for making our own conditions to have ongoing conversations in an alternative regime of study, which resonates with Moten and Harney's vision of a continual circulation of knowledge-teaching-study (2009). Instead of treating my interviews as 'data' to be analyzed, I see them as moments in ongoing conversations between co-researchers and co-organizers, whose terrains of study and organizing traverse academic institutions as well as movements 'within and against' them and 'with and for' those who are excluded and marginalized from them. Through these conversations, our collective study has helped me articulate better questions, re-consider my approach, discover new material and lines of inquiry, and led me to meet further people (with some of whom I

[68] On the web-based part of the project, I have been posting collaboratively revised versions of the interviews that I have conducted, as well as several essays, articles, and interviews by others (some under pseudonyms), and I plan to post the rest of the interviews as I transcribe them and edit them in correspondence with the interviewees. Through spreading the interviews via social media (Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr) and listserves, the website has been viewed over 24,000 times in a little over a year, with each interview receiving between 300 and 2,000 views. This is probably far more engagement than they would receive if I would have only analyzed and referenced them in my dissertation.

conducted interviews). Through spreading the interviews via social media, my interviewees and I have engaged with more people through online discussions about the content of the interviews, extending our conversations through hearing critical perspectives and opening further questions.

Thus, rather than attempt to give a thorough, methodical analysis of the interviews in this dissertation, I have opted to present a few insights that I found especially important for my problematic, and to focus on a couple, admittedly very selected controversies between some of my interviewees.[69] Particularly, many of my interviewees expressed critical views on appeals to a public ideal of higher education, and some of them offered alternative visions, such as of universities that are more grounded in communities or that are connected with practices of 'commons' or 'the common.' The openness of these controversies, and the differences across my interviewees' views on them, provide some justification for why I chose my particular theoretical focus—on community, the common, commons, and undercommons—in the rest of this chapter.

Interviews: Controversies between 'Within and Against' // 'With and For'

Out of the thirty-six people whom I interviewed, about a third of them had a lot to say along an 'engaged withdrawal' line of questioning (while most of the others often had something to say along these lines, but had much more to say along the lines of *either* engaging in struggles within dominant universities *or* engaging in struggles to create something alternative outside). I focus here on seven of these interviewees' accounts, attempting to analyze their commonalities and differences. To summarize my analysis of

[69] In extensions of my project, I plan to engage more thoroughly with the interviews, both through writing further academic texts, collaborating with the URGE collective on co-edited book of the interviews, and posting more interviews and non-academic writings on the web-based part of the project.

how their differences play out in their critiques of the dominant universities, their visions of an alternative university, and their relationships between the dominant and the alternative, I define a relative split between two groups of them along these lines: some focus more on place-based, historically grounded relations with marginal communities (Alvaro Reyes, Mark Paschal, Claudia Bernardi, and Zach Schwartz-Weinstein), while others have significantly less of such a focus (Cesare Casarino, Alison Hearn, and Mike Neary). To describe the complexities of the different sides of these controversies, I analyze these and the other interviews as well as other material written on these issues.

Many of my interviewees were critical of appeals to defend romanticized ideals of the university. From Mark Paschal's writing a dissertation on the history of universities, he has compiled massive evidence to support the argument that universities have always served the ruling class. In response to slogans of 'Defending the Public University' and 'Reclaiming Our University' in recent university struggles, Paschal argues that

> while it is true that these statements are slogans and rallying cries for organizing, a truly radical student movement must also assert that the institutions of higher education we mobilize around are not now and have never properly been 'Our University.' … The 'American Public University'—which should include private universities as a subset—is a fundamentally capitalist organization of knowledge and laborers that arose as the industrial capitalist class in the United States was coming to assert its hegemony over the US in the mid-19th century. (Paschal 2012)

While Paschal's work emphasizes the capitalist character of the university, in Zach Schwartz-Weinstein's dissertation on the history of university struggles, particularly of non-instructional university laborers, he emphasizes its colonial character. Although both of these researchers theorize both the capitalist and the colonial character of the university and their interrelations, in comparison with Paschal, Schwartz-Weinstein puts relatively greater focus on the colonial aspects. Through his involvement as an

undergraduate student in support of service workers' organizing, he "got a very strong sense of the kind of colonial relationship that existed between the city and the university."[70] He sees this colonial relationship as

> predicated on, not only the kind of control of land that the university was engaged in—in order to produce the kinds of amenities around itself that it wanted in order to market itself and/as the city to prospective students, employees, and donors—but also the control of labor and the way that the university was profiting from the immiseration of the city, in really strategic ways. And the way in which its everyday reproduction was hinged on the labor of a lot of poor and working class people who were directly and indirectly employed by the university.

In my interview with Alvaro Reyes (a professor of geography and an organizer of a Zapatismo-influenced social center), he brings together these two struggles—against colonialism and capitalism—in relation to the university, as well, and in a more elaborated way:

> On one side, you have the communal cooperation taking place in the inner cities, which could have been an actual alternative, which is called Blackness. And then, on the other side, you have this formation of the neoliberal subjectivity, the personal entrepreneur—the person who sees their life as an actual investment; everything is based on risk and outcome, the sort of anti-cooperative subject.
> …
> The entire history of the US is built on this: the dual society model, where in order for the white middle class to keep its privileges, everybody else has to get screwed. The students have to understand that, and the way to escape this is: if we're going to make the university a site of anti-neoliberal struggle, the only way it can be made such is to challenge that dual society. Or else, what the movement is actually doing is promoting neoliberalism but simultaneously demanding that your own privileges not be challenged.[71]

Many of my interviewees also offered visions for an alternative kind of university, some of which were based on their practical experiences of trying to create

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[70] Interview with Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, 6/5/12. His research is "a history of non-instructional labor at US universities from the 1940s to the present. It's tracking the history of service work and workers, first, in the formation of the political economy of university expansion in the post-war period and, second, with university restructuring in the more contemporary moment through the management, experiences, and forms of resistance of university service workers."

[71] Interview with Alvaro Reyes, 6/8/12.

such alternatives. One of the key differences between their alternative visions is over whether they are more rooted in a place or more nomadic. The visions offered by Reyes, Paschal, Schwartz-Weinstein, and Claudia Bernardi are more grounded in particular places and the embodied relationships and histories of struggle of marginal communities. By contrast, Casarino and Neary's visions are relatively more abstracted from the historically and geographically bound struggles of particular communities, but they offer relatively more elaborate visions of an alternative university, what they call a "university of the common." Casarino articulates a key feature of a university of the common as its withdrawal from the degree-granting function of both public and private universities:

> Universities are degree-granting institutions at this point. It is precisely through its degree-granting form that the university is being hooked into a certain circuit of extraction of surplus value. It's not the only hook, but it's one of the great ones—where the university has been turned into a factory for producing degrees that one buys and then one can do something with, such as getting a job later. As opposed to this, which is true of both private and public universities, the new spaces I'm thinking about—these spaces for the production and circulation of knowledge—should not be in any way linked to granting degrees. In other words, they should not be finalized to the entrance of the student, let's say, into the labor market. Now, of course people cannot afford not to be in the labor market. So, I'm not saying that degree-granting institutions should disappear. I'm saying that parallel from this, we should put energy into—and I have put a little energy and I should do more about this—thinking about and experimenting with spaces that are spaces of knowledge production and circulation, but they are not linked to the extraction of surplus value in that sense, through for example the granting of the degree. [72]

For an example that partially realizes his vision (while acknowledging "its faults and problems"), Casarino points to the seminars of the Uninomade in Italy:

> We have a nomadic institution that travels from city to city and it is organized by the students and by the people who are going to be the students. It is periodically moving around the Italian peninsula in different cities and there, inviting intellectuals, sometimes academics sometimes not, to come and talk on a specific topic.

[72] Interview with Cesare Casarino, 6/10/12.

The vision of a "university of the common" that Mike Neary[73] articulates has many similarities with Casarino's vision, but Neary's vision also draws on his personal experiences in attempting to create one: the Social Science Centre in Lincoln, UK. Neary also carefully distinguishes his vision of this "university of the common" from public universities: "We at the same time want to protect what is worth protecting about the public institution of the university, but at the same time we recognize that the public university is itself a form of capitalist regulation and is not the answer to a progressive radical politics, or a revolutionary politics."[74] To elaborate this vision, he draws on Gigi Roggero's concept of the "institution of the common" (Roggero 2011), an idea that

> also comes out of militant inquiry and co-research, developed by the Italian autonomists in particular and maybe even before that by groups of anarchists. This is the idea that the Social Science Centre is not about teaching and learning; it's about the production of critical, practical knowledge. But in that process of the production of critical, practical knowledge, a new form of radical political subjectivity emerges that is not pre-planned in any way, but is entirely appropriate to the context to which we are responding, and is a critique of that process.

When asked about the relationship between the Social Science Centre and marginalized communities, Neary attempted to avoid making such distinctions between the community around their project and other, marginalized communities:

> We do want to attract people who see themselves as marginalized and who don't have access to the university. So, that's absolutely the kind of people we want to be a part of and work with alongside. But, the point I'm trying to make is, we don't see ourselves as being a group who is trying to work alongside local community groups in that model of community development and to support them and do stuff for them—that sort of colonial attitude that the university tends to have when it's involved in public engagement.

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[73] Mike Neary is the Dean of Teaching and Learning at the University of Lincoln. He is one of the founders of Student as Producer at the University of Lincoln and of The Social Science Centre. Neary also uses the concept of "institution of the common" to describe the former project, in his paper, "Student as producer: an institution of the common? [or how to recover communist/revolutionary science]" (Neary 2012).

[74] Interview with Mike Neary, 7/20/12.

Along the lines of Neary's anti-colonial critique of normal university relationships with marginalized communities, but somewhat in contrast with Casarino and Neary's visions, some of my other interviewees had visions of alternative universities that more centrally involved relationships with marginalized communities. Articulating such relationships across a two-pronged approach to struggles within the places of marginal communities and universities, Alvaro Reyes argues:

> On one side, I think we have to make an engaged withdrawal [from the universities] and create these other spaces, where people can see consistent intellectual projects being engaged in the community life. So, they have a reason to say, 'oh, they're attacking these intellectuals, that's a bad thing.' Right now, they have no reason to say that. On the other side, within the universities, we need to make it a site of struggle, but in order to do so, we have to disengage the university from the elitism that it's been.[75]

Drawing on his experiences of organizing the El Kilombo social center in Durham, NC, he argues for the creation of autonomous, truly open and free university spaces that are grounded in relation to particular, marginal communities, connecting with, and amplifying, the informal networks of cooperation that already exist in them.

Partially varying from Casarino and Neary's calls for creating new spaces in which we can experiment with forms of knowledge production and circulation that are alternative to those of the university (such as their examples of Uninomade and the Social Science Centre), Reyes argues that such alternative knowledge production and circulation is already happening in the informal networks of cooperation in marginal communities. Reyes also argues for creating new spaces, but instead of flexible spaces for experimentation with concepts and forms of knowledge, he calls for spaces that are more grounded in particular places so as to develop long-term, sustainable, affective relationships with the people in those marginal communities. A key difference seems to

[75] Interview with Alvaro Reyes, 6/8/12.

be between Casarino and Neary's focus on ideas, concepts, knowledge, and communication and Reyes's focus on embodied, place-based relationships—both the enabling conditions for building those relationships, such as the creation of autonomous spaces, and the limiting conditions of gentrification and mass incarceration that destroy networks of cooperation in those communities.

At the same time, Reyes argues for a kind of "engaged withdrawal" from the dominant universities, simultaneously, in order to push them toward being more like the free and open autonomous universities created in these marginal community-grounded spaces. Along similar lines, Mark Paschal argues for interconnecting the creation of new autonomous universities with struggles within and against public universities. He sees the creation of the former as making the imaginal grounds from which those involved in university struggles can compose their arguments about the *limits* of the dominant universities. Paschal argues that a key point for understanding what is at stake in creating an alternative university is to see what motivates people to go to universities, both currently and throughout their history: "learning how to make better lives for themselves, through training that's going to allow them to get into the job market or to give them skills with which they can do something that takes them out of the job market."[76] As opposed to the humanities, people were much more excited about going to universities in order to learn vocational skills. So, for his ideal autonomous university, Paschal envisions a "framing of vocational ideas inside of a larger radical project," and he points to some possible historical predecessors, such as workers' schools in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

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[76] Interview with Mark Paschal, 6/21/12. Published online at http://classwaru.org/2012/07/12/bloated-corpses-and-institutional-limits-an-interview-with-mark-paschal/

Similarly to Reyes, Paschal argues that we should take a dual route of organizing, a kind of "engaged withdrawal," whereby while we create these autonomous universities, those of us who have not been excluded from the elitist universities and who have access to them as students and/or workers *must* still organize at them, because "you have to struggle where you are, because class struggle exists everywhere there are classes—everywhere there's an institute or site of production, there's going to be struggle." Adding some historical support to Reyes's argument for the necessary interconnectedness of these struggles, Paschal argues that "history seems to show me that university transformation happens through the de-legitimation of universities as they have existed, and the formation of new institutions, whether they're academies or universities. Institutions as they exist don't reform themselves. They reform themselves when they're confronted with their own limits on what they could possibly be."

For an example of a vision of a place-grounded alternative university from a different context, I draw on my interview with Claudia Bernardi about her work with an autonomous social center (ESC) in a relationship of 'engaged withdrawal' with La Sapienza University in Rome, Italy:[77]

> Our aim was to occupy a space—a free, independent one—and we occupied it mainly with undergrad students, PhD students, and precarious workers of the 3rd sector (services, social workers for migrants, and care laborers).
> …
> [W]e were in the social center we called ESC, an autonomous atelier, but at the same time we have different autonomous assemblies in most of the colleges of the university. In this sense, we always have a tight connection and people are going from one space to the other. And that was the first huge experience of being involved, because it was 24 hours a day, 7 days a week of activities. It was basically aimed to cross the border of the university, to share knowledge in an

[77] For more information on ESC, see http://www.escatelier.net/ .

> independent way, and at the same time, to contaminate the academy and their form of knowledge production.[78]

Comparing my four interviewees who put the most emphasis on the importance of place-based, historically grounded relations with marginal communities, I find several key open questions, which I draw out by describing two further ways of differentiating their analyses.[79] First, they put different degrees of emphasis on where they see the strategically best sites for intervention within dominant universities (i.e., the institutions of the education-based regime of study), and accordingly, how alternative universities (enacting alternative regimes of study) should relate with those sites of intervention. Second, they put different emphases on which actors should be engaged in these interventions, and, then, how those actors should connect with the struggles.

In response to the question of what roles an alternative university should play in resistance to, or subversion of, the education-based regime of study, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein argues the need to organize *with and for* service and maintenance workers in universities.[80] Narratives about organizing around universities often center on academics and students, and the shadow of these figures make invisible the colonial relations between academics and other workers as well as their colonial relations with the neighborhoods in the wider metropolis in which the workers live. Thinking of universities as massive places with multitudes of people performing such diverse, interconnected varieties of labor, we can think about all of the service and maintenance

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[78] Interview with Claudia Bernardi, 6/25/12. Published online at http://classwaru.org/2012/09/24/contaminating-the-university-creating-autonomous-knowledge-occupied-social-and-cultural-centers-in-italy/

[79] Several of my other interviewees, such as Carolina Sarmiento and Tim Stallmann, also put a great deal of emphasis on the importance of these grounded relationships.

[80] Interview with Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, 6/5/12.

labor that goes into creating the caring, affective relationships as well as other material conditions (e.g., well-maintained departmental and classroom spaces). These affective, material conditions serve as the bases for students and academics to form relationships of community, all of which are, in turn, their bases for performing the labor of studying, teaching, and research. Schwartz-Weinstein asks how we can think about exodus from the university—into autonomous universities—in a way that avoids imagining that kind of exodus as a liberation of one group's labor, the 'cognitariat' or whatever, from the labor of others.

By contrast—though potentially complementarily—with Schwartz-Weinstein's focus on the labor of service and maintenance workers, Claudia Bernardi focuses on students, as well as other precarious workers from outside the university, as figures circulating between the dominant university and the autonomous university.

> Basically, what we do to connect the two spaces—ESC and the academy—is to create events and seminars and activities mainly for students inside the social center, and at the same time, the people who self-organize the social center are always present in the university. Even precarious workers always frequent the university.[81]

Similar to Bernardi's focus on both dominant universities and alternative spaces, but with less concern about having figures such as students circulating between them, Reyes and Paschal focus more on pushing the limits of dominant universities through creating an alternative university outside, and across the campus's borders, and through body-and-place-grounded relationships with marginalized communities. There are subtle differences between all of their positions, and none of them gives a definitive blueprint or says that one space is definitely *the* most important point of engagement—and they all

[81] Interview with Claudia Bernardi, 6/25/12.

have some hesitancies. Therefore, my theory aims to give conceptual tools/toys for understanding better what is at stake in these different approaches and how to determine the strategic importance of different points for intervention.

Across these controversies, I see a key connecting thread as the issue of *representation of communities*, within, outside, and across the boundaries of universities. I see this as a second key issue that I am drawing from my preliminary analysis of the interviews, in addition to the first issue of the controversies between my interviewees about how they articulate an ideal vision for a university that is alternative to the public university ideal—variously drawing on theories of 'the common,' 'commons,' or some kind of embedded relationship with marginal communities and their autonomous practices of study and cooperation. In order to describe the key controversies across my interviewees' different ways of engaging these issues, I articulate a set of questions that will guide and motivate my theorization in the subsequent chapters. Comparing the differences and commonalities across my interviewees' critiques, visions, and strategies, I see the following key controversies—framed as strategic and tactical questions:

- In attempts to make an autonomous university that is embedded with marginal communities' informal networks of study and cooperation, how should its creators and participants think of the relationship between communities of those who work in the university and communities outside of the university?
    - How to conceive of the antagonistic and cooperative relationships within a departmental community—which includes, on the one hand, formal and informal networks of cooperation, and on the other hand, relations of competition, exploitation, and oppression, between tenured/tenure-track

and contingent faculty, service and maintenance workers, and students, both as workers and as tuition-paying students? How do these multi-faceted relations make representations of community always contested and in flux?

- How to conceive of the relations between these different, conflicting sets of relationships within a departmental community and other communities within the university, including the temporary communities between students and teachers in classrooms, the communities amongst workers (both outside of and within formal unions), and the wider communities of the university campus (including the labor of producing affective relationships that make an appearance of 'community' – e.g., as featured in the university's promotional materials for attracting students)?
    - How to conceive of the relations between the ideals of 'community' implied by the vision of the public university and the critiques of and/or synergies with these ideals as implied or made explicit in visions of an alternative university (e.g., critique of their exclusionary and colonial character while retaining their aspirations of service of the common good and openness of resources for study in common for all)?
- How to conceive of the relations between these constructions of communities in the university and of the marginal communities outside the university that an alternative university is supposed to be embedded in?

- E.g., 1) If some of the people who participate in an alternative university (in its alternative regimes of study) and who live in the neighborhoods around it are also students and/or workers in the dominant university and in the businesses around the campus that serve the university population, how can they collaborate with academic actors—who both work in the dominant university and participate in the autonomous university—to subvert the dominant university's colonial relationships to its service and maintenance workers and its students (i.e., the epistemic coloniality of the education-based regime of study and the neocolonialism of seeking employment within the institution but without ever really being able to belong)?[82]
- E.g., 2) How can participants in an alternative university foster community control of their land in opposition to neo-colonial gentrification, such as 'studentification'—i.e., students and academics from the dominant university moving into neighborhoods near campus with lower rents and, thereby, rents rise, displacing people from marginal communities and destabilizing the material bases of their informal networks of cooperation?

[82] With Mark Paschal's call to avoid reproducing a relationship of colonial, paternalist education in creating alternative universities: "How can we institutionalize practices that rid academics of habits of saying, 'We've got these things, you should make use of them,' and to instead habituate them into asking, 'How can we make use of the things we have in the struggle?'" (cf. Interview with Mark Paschal, 6/21/12)

        - E.g., 3) Considering the wealth of resources of the dominant universities—from libraries, technologies, and spaces to people and money—how can those who work within them use representations of 'community' (including those of members of the marginal communities with whom they work in the autonomous universities) in order to gain access for purposes of use and expropriation? At the same time, in such a covertly criminal relationship to the dominant university, how can they minimize and subvert the recuperation of the marginal communities' energies for the university's own reproduction of itself or for academics' careerist self-reproduction within academic capitalism?
    - How should resistances to the dominant university and creations of an alternative university engage with *separations* across and within different constructions of 'communities' (whether created coercively, e.g., segregations, or autonomously defined, e.g., cultural self-determinations)?[83]
    - How should an alternative university engage with the *credentialing* of study?
        - Should marginal communities create forms of credentialing for the alternative regimes of study that are co-constituted with their

[83] For an example of how segregations could play out: in the dominant education policymakers' narratives of a 'school drop-out crisis' (e.g., as deployed by Colin Powell, Barack Obama, and Arne Duncan), certain constructions of 'communities' are used that tend to hide racial, economic, and linguistic segregations (as well as related inequalities of financial wealth and socio-political power), while focusing on the purported responsibilities of individualized students, parents, teachers, and skills for the students' educational success (i.e., graduation rates) or failure (i.e., school non-completion rates, framed in a individualizing, blaming way as 'drop-out rates'). How can 'engaged withdrawal' movements challenge these discourses and the segregations and inequalities that they legitimate?

informal networks of cooperation outside of educational institutions—i.e., formalizing them in some way? If so, should these credits and degrees be seen as competing with those of dominant universities (e.g., for helping their recipients gain access to employment)? Or should they be seen as constituting an alternative system of credentialing, possibly in relation to employment with institutions of diverse forms of alternative, cooperative, solidarity economies?[84] Alternatively, should the valuation of learning in marginal communities avoid the degree-granting function of education-based regime of study?

- How to conceive the relations between communities and *debt*?
  - Should members of marginal communities seek insertion into the dominant universities and undertake the burdens of student debt from tuition, and then organize around the politics of debt, such as through a debt strike (possibly in relation to other types of debt—housing, credit cards, pay-day loans, etc.)? How to conceive of communities formed around these *commercial* kinds of debt in relation to communities and geographies of anger, depression, and resistance formed around the *unpayable* debts of slavery and colonialism, as well as communities of love and solidarity formed around the *unpayable* debts of family, friendship, and the historical traditions of land-based cultures?[85]

[84] On "diverse economies," see Gibson-Graham, 2008.
[85] On "unpayable debts," cf. Graeber 2011, Moten and Harney 2013.

At first glance, this cluster of questions seems overwhelmingly complex, almost paralyzing for any attempt to engage them in practice. Thus, in order to approach these questions in better, more a/effectively practice-facilitating ways, in the remainder of this Chapter, I develop a better, more comprehensive and consistent, theory. I draw on theories of undercommons, commons, and the common, which I elaborate into a constellation of concepts for negotiating the tensions and conflicts articulated in these questions, among others from my dissertation's problematic.

Theory for Getting Over Our Fears and Under Our 'Selves': The Under-common(s)

In order to elaborate on the provisional exploration, from chapter 1, of the sources and effects of academics' fears of applying abolitionist, decolonial critiques to higher education—in simplistic terms, 'biting the hand that feeds'—the main theory to which I turn is the 'undercommons.' Complementary with how this theory provides helpful conceptual tools/toys for thinking about the politics of representing 'communities,' it can also be helpful for engaging with the politics of representing 'selves,' which is at the heart of the production of these fears. The 'undercommons' theory gives a way to describe how experiences and processes of constructing representations of the 'ambivalent educational self' intersect with those of other 'selves,' such as the "ambivalent white self" (Lensmire 2010). Further, it enables describing how these politics are related with the politics of representation of 'communities,' such as how the fear of symbolic and systemic forms of violence from the authorities in the different communities of universities (e.g., professors in the classroom community, chairs and advisors in the departmental community, and administrators in the university community as a whole) can create pressures on people in the university to subscribe to

representations of unified selves, rather than grappling with the tensions of their ambivalent selves in inter-relation with the ethics and politics of their various communities.

The set of literatures that I term the 'undercommons theory' dives into a cluster of tensions around the politics of power, knowledge, subjectivity, and representation in higher education. To grapple with different understandings of these tensions and to rehearse approaches to them, they deploy new theories—toolboxes or toyboxes full of concepts, such as 'undercommons,' 'blackness,' 'minor politics,' 'infrapolitics,' and 'imperceptible politics,' which are potentially useful for constructing, or playing with, responses to these tensions in practice (cf. Moten and Harney 2004; 2009b; 2013; Shukaitis 2009a; Papadopoulos et al 2008; Thoburn 2003). In the remainder of this chapter, I bring into conversation the theories of the common and commons as a way to elaborate on the theory of undercommons.

One key theoretical controversy in discussions of the 'undercommons' is over whether it refers to 'the commons,' 'the common,' or both. Another key theoretical controversy is over the relationship of the 'undercommons' to different aspects of the intersecting regimes of capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, etc. Most uses of 'commons' and 'the common' tend to tie these concepts to resistance to capitalism, but some connect them with resistance to patriarchy (e.g., Federici 2004; 2011) and to white supremacy and heteronormativity (e.g., Moten and Harney 2004 – relating blackness and queerness with 'undercommons'). To synthesize these approaches, I draw lines from the conflicts between colonial commons and indigenous undercommons during the colonization of the Americas and Africa to the conflicts

between the colonial commons of university gentrification and the undercommons of marginal communities. Then, I argue that, by seeing these historical and geographic continuities more clearly, we can engage more coherently and powerfully in struggles within and against the dominant universities and their colonial, hetero-patriarchal, white supremacist, capitalist commons (i.e., the commons created in relation to the education-based regime of study), and with and for alternative regimes of study embedded in the indigenous, black, chican@, feminist, queer, working-class undercommons of informal networks of cooperation.

Disambiguating 'Commons' and 'the Common'

The commons is useful for describing a mode of living in the world that is other than the capitalist, statist mode. It has been used by liberal, progressive, and socialist theorists, such as Eleanor Ostrom, to argue for a kind of community control of "common pool resources" that is alternative to either state control or privatization of those resources. But, this is an argument that they apply to only some kinds of resources and that is not antagonistic to, or inconsistent with, a state and capitalist dominated political economy. By contrast, other theorists have used the concept of 'commons' as part of their theoretical tools for anti-capitalist movements. Generally, the two major anti-capitalist movements have been anarchists and Marxists, with the former being generally more anti-statist than the latter. Within each of these groupings there are many competing tendencies, and across the groupings there are many conflicts and complementarities. Some tendencies of anarchists, especially anarcho-communists (e.g., Kropotkin 1902; Sarason 1976; Taylor 1976; Bookchin 1980; Fox 1985; Milstein 2010), and some tendencies of Marxists, especially autonomist Marxists (e.g., De Angelis 2007; Harvie

2004; Federici 2004; 2011; 2013; Caffentzis 2010; 2013), have taken up commons as a useful conceptual tool. Considering this overlap while recognizing the centuries of debates between these groups, I ask the question: what is at stake for anti-capitalist struggles with their different deployments of the concept? To approach this question from an even more specific angle, in examining the uses of "the commons" amongst autonomist Marxists, I have noticed that there is a further debate internal to them: some of them use "the commons" while others use "the common," which has a related but quite different meaning that connects with a whole other theoretical tradition, drawing on Spinoza's concept of "common notions."[86] Why do some autonomist Marxists share the anarchists' deployment of "the commons" while others use "the common" and some use both? What are the implications of these differences for movements of 'within and against' // 'with and for' around higher education?

In discussions around contemporary anti-capitalist struggles, the concepts of "the commons" and "the common" have often been used to highlight key aspects of the political terrain. Authors tend either to see little difference between these terms, using them interchangeably (e.g., de Peuter and Dyer-Witheford 2010; Kanuga 2010; Pusey 2010), or to promote the use of "the common" (e.g., Casarino and Negri 2008; Hardt and Negri 2000; 2004; 2009; Read 2003; Roggero 2011) or "the commons" (e.g., Federici 2011; Caffentzis 2010; Linebaugh 2008; De Angelis 2007; Harvie 2004; Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009) to the exclusion of the other. A particularly blatant example of this

[86] According to Cesare Casarino, an autonomist Marxist, Spinoza's "common notions" are "the ideas of that which is common in two or more modes, including those 'ideas … which are common to all human beings'" (Casarino 2008a, 32; citing Spinoza's *Ethics*). These "common notions" are the basis for what Spinoza sees as the second kind of knowledge, which he calls "reason" and is "knowledge of the common" (the first and third kinds of knowledge are "imagination" and "intuitive knowledge," respectively). Casarino elaborates this Spinozist concept of the common through putting it in conversation with Marx's theory, developing his own, more nuanced theory of the common, including the concept of 'surplus common' (addressed in the next section).

suppression of the controversy is Hardt and Negri's *Commonwealth* (2009) in which they neither use the word "commons" in their text nor acknowledge that there might be a debate over using it or "the common," while they cite several authors who use "the commons" rather than "the common"—including Peter Linebaugh, Massimo De Angelis, Naomi Klein, and Donald Nonini—as a means of supporting their claim that there have been "recent arguments for the common in various fields" (387). Those authors who favor using "the common" often give critiques of uses of "the commons," but these critiques tend to set up strawman arguments, such as by alluding to its use by liberal authors, such as Garret Hardin's "tragedy of the commons," rather than directly addressing the arguments of fellow anti-capitalist theorists who use "the commons." Likewise, the latter seem to be dismissive of theorists of "the common" because of flaws they find in their broader theories that are not directly related to an analysis of their theories of "the common."[87]

By contrast, I develop an argument that demonstrates the importance of using *both* "the commons" and "the common" as frames for guiding struggles that engage the 'within and against' and 'with and for' problematic. In the following three sections, I elaborate a theory of commons and common that describes them as *distinct but recursively interrelated* concepts. To summarize the main steps of my elaboration: In the first section, I describe the common as the means and product of communication, I see the surplus of anything as being capable of being posited as either surplus value (capital) or surplus common (the common in its potentiality). I argue that one way of positing this distinction and actualizing the common for anti-capitalist purposes is to frame it using

[87] An example is De Angelis's critique of Hardt and Negri, which focuses mostly on their theories of "the multitude" without engaging directly with their theory of "the common," despite that the latter theory is central for any understanding of the former (De Angelis 2007, 167-171).

fantasies (i.e., imaginal machines) of 'commons' and 'enclosure.' In the second section, I elaborate the concepts of commons (as relations between people and things mediated by some human group's value practices) and enclosure (as a relation of separation between people and things that creates the pre-conditions for capitalist relations), describing how narratives that deploy them *can* have performative effects for anti-capitalist purposes, but whether or not they have such effects is an open question, because their communicative circulation, subscription, and enactment takes place in and through the common. Thus, the distinction between surplus value and surplus common must be posited again, and repeatedly, in relation to every instance of communication in these practices. Certain discourses, such as those of 'waste' and 'efficiency,' can suppress the potentialities of positing these distinctions. I argue that the enabling conditions in which this continual positing should take place are communicative practices in a regime of study alternative to the education-based one. In the third section, then, I articulate an approach for recursively engaging commons and the common: to distinguish types of commons (e.g., colonial vs. indigenous) and to engage with questions—in and through the common—about whether and how the norms (i.e., value practices) of these commons are tied up with enclosure and capitalism.

(1) The Common

The concept of 'the common,' drawing on Cesare Casarino, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri, refers to a common intellectual, linguistic, and affective capacity along with its appertaining forms of realization and circulation (Casarino 2008b, 13; Hardt and Negri, 2000; 2004; 2009). It is, basically, the means and product of communication.

Three of its key features are that it involves both the potentiality and actuality of thought and language, it is "defined in terms of communication" (not community), and it is a "universalist concept" (Casarino 2008b, 12-13). Under the current, post-Fordist regime of capitalism, the common has become the prime motor of the capitalist mode of production. The common has been increasingly "turned into communicative labor and has been put to work for postmodern capitalism"—"harnessed, expropriated, and exploited for the extraction of surplus value" (14).

The key concept that Casarino presents for an anti-capitalist politics of the common is 'surplus,' which is a very difficult concept to define—Casarino defines it as "potentiality qua potentiality" (Casarino 2008b, 22)—and thus, for a clearer understanding of it, the concept must be elaborated concretely relative to particular situations. For example, in a traditional Marxist view of 'surplus,' it could be defined as when some workers produce more of a product than is necessary for meeting their basic needs. From an autonomist Marxist perspective, we could see the so-called 'immaterial labor' of communication producing a surplus of affective social relationships, lingering beyond their use in commodity production, exchange, and consumption.[88] Despite the situational relativity of the concept, "there is only one surplus" (22). Only through positing this surplus in different ways does "the qualitative difference between capital and the common" emerge—i.e., through "engaging surplus to different ends," or "formulating surplus as a question and living it out" (23). Thus we can conceptualize the distinction between capital and common as two different ways of living surplus: surplus

[88] Another helpful way of thinking about surplus might be to define it using the (Deleuze and Whitehead inspired) concepts of "excessive desires," "inappropriate/d sociabilities," and "haptic trajectories," which are intended to describe movements of association that are before and beyond capture within regimes of representation (Papadopoulos *et al* 2008).

common and surplus value. On the one hand, *surplus value* is "living surplus as separation (in the form of value par excellence, namely, money)," and it is accumulated in the form of capital. Surplus value is "the absent cause immanent in the general effect (value)," and thus, it "governs the entire machinic assemblage of capital" (29-30). On the other hand, *surplus common* is "living surplus as incorporation (in the forms of the common, including and especially our bodies)" (23).

When I say that we should posit this distinction between surplus value and surplus common, following Casarino, I do not mean that it should be seen as a real distinction but rather as a "purely analytic" one—'analytic' because there is no longer any outside to capital or the common, i.e., they are two, "virtually indistinguishable," competing ways of figuring the universal (15). Thus, this distinction is itself a fantasy, or rather, an "imaginal machine" (Shukaitis 2009b), which is a phrase that I use to conceive of the *materiality* of imagination and fantasy, highlighting the material pathways through which they are communicated, circulated, received, subscribed to, interpreted, and associated with the other 'machines' (desiring, thinking, loving, defecating, etc.) that compose the human body (as one kind of 'machinic assemblage,' interrelated with many others).[89] Despite seeing this distinction as a fantasy, positing this imaginal machine—and circulating it and inspiring people to subscribe to it—can create performative effects of neutralizing "the capitalist fantasy of capital's identity with the common" and of "producing the desire to be in common" (Casarino 2008b, 16).

Building on Casarino's theory, if we see the common as having two main aspects to its structure—"its *potentiality* in the form of the surplus common, and its

[89] 'Imaginal machines' is a concept that I draw from Stevphen Shukaitis (2009b), who in turn develops it from Robin D.G. Kelley's notion of "freedom dreams" (Kelley 2002). Shukaitis also alludes to Giles Deleuze's constellation of concepts, particularly the notion of "desiring machines."

actualizations in past, present, and future forms" (16)—then we can ask, what kinds of actualizations of the common could be useful for movements that grapple with the tensions from combining the paths of struggles 'within and against' and 'with and for'?

My hypothesis is that the anti-capitalist distinction between *commons and enclosure* provides a way of imaginally framing these actualizations that can be useful for guiding struggles, on the terrain of universities and beyond. The surplus common provides the addition of *potentiality*. The practice of desiring to be in common is "'not so much to think' surplus 'as to show that it is there'"; seeing surplus and potentiality as a kind of 'void,' "it is up to us to decide what to build on the void"—i.e., to make decisions, shaped by our desires, projecting imaginal trajectories into the void of what is to come (Casarino 2008b, 36-37). In addition to surplus common's quality of potentiality, it also has the quality of *universality*—a "nonessentialist" kind of universalism, "based on common potentials and common projects, as opposed to those (either Kantian or Hegelian) universalisms that find their stable ground in shared and essential identities" (253n25). By contrast, actualizations of the common have the quality of particularity. The actualizations of 'commons' and 'enclosure' bring in the particularized referents of 'community' (whether 'local' or 'national'), which is at odds with the universality of surplus common—they raise the threat of pushing the nonessentialist universalism of the common into essentialist forms.[90] Thus, the relationship between this universal potential

[90] Casarino argues that the nonessentialist universality of the common makes it antithetical to the essentialized identities often associated with 'community.' Yet, I will argue below that nonessentialized forms of 'community' exist as well. Casarino makes distinctions that prepare the grounds for my argument: "One of the major political implications of such a concept of essense as singularity is that in Spinoza the common has nothing to do with community understood as *Gemeinschaft*. Whereas the latter is fundamentally essentialist and exclusionary—in the sense that all of its members must share in the same transcendent essence as identity, such as race, religion, nation, language, and so on, thereby excluding by definition all others whose essence is defined as different—the former consists of modes that are essentially different from one another and that come together on the basis of that which agrees in them, such as, for

and the particular actualizations should be seen as an open one. In general, it is open to being determined in two different ways. On the one hand, the relation between universal and particular can be determined by the capitalist fantasy that portrays universality in terms of the commodity and value forms—as institutionalized in the apparently ubiquitous, inexorable capitalist system of competition for scarce waged jobs to earn money for buying the commodified necessities of life. On the other hand, it can be determined by positing the imaginal machine of a distinction between capital and common—i.e., between surplus value and surplus common. Each option involves determination of the relation by believing in a fantasy, but each results in very different performative effects.

It may seem that I am proposing a circular argument here ('posit surplus as surplus common in order to create a performative effect of constituting desires for positing surplus common'). Casarino offers a helpful approach for grappling with this ongoing concern:

> This may sound like a suffocating, unbreakable, vicious circle—but it is not necessarily one at all. Being is not a serpent swallowing its own tail. The solution to this apparent stalemate is not to shy away from actualizations altogether: it lies, rather, in actualizing without foreclosing that which enables us to actualize in the first place. (Casarino 2008b, 22-23)

There are moments of contingency, controversy, and instability—of potentiality—all along this circle that allow for different movements of actualization that could break it out of a tautology. By raising "communizing questions" at each moment of whether the different kinds of performative effects of constituting anti-capitalist desires are realized or not, the circle could be made into a series of feed-forward, virtuously spiraling

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example, common trajectories and common projects. Importantly, for Spinoza all modes 'agree in certain things'—and hence the common in principle does not exclude any mode." (Casarino 2008a, 267n77)

'looping effects' (from anti-capitalist fantasy to anti-capitalist desire to anti-capitalist practices to new, expansive fantasies).[91] Subscribing to the capitalist imaginal machine stabilizes all of the potentials for opening up these controversies, while positing of the capital-versus-common distinction attempts (though by no means guarantees) to open them up—i.e., to destabilize the capitalist fantasy's portrayal of a *lack of potential* for surplus to become actualized in non-capitalist ways. The discursive terrain of the capitalist fantasy includes, not only positive narratives of 'value,' but also negative narratives that de-value, and treat as 'waste' and 'inefficiencies,' those non-capitalist alternative ways of positing surplus.

In the following sections, I explore two connected concepts, or 'imaginal machines'—'commons' and 'enclosure'—for positing the capital-versus-common distinction, and I elaborate them for the purposes of engaging in 'within and against' // 'with and for' movements. The effectiveness of this approach requires recursive shifts of reflection, through collective study, between fantasies of the universal potential of surplus common and the particular actualizations as well as, simultaneously, practices that attempt to realize those actualizations. Throughout, I theorize the ways in which narratives of 'value' and 'waste' can be deployed as limiting or enabling conditions for such actualizations to occur in capitalist or non-capitalist forms.

(2) Imaginal Machines of 'Commons' and 'Enclosure'

Before diving into the question of how commons and enclosure can be used for 'within and against' // 'with and for' movements, I give here a basic introduction to the

[91] On "communizing questions," see De Mattis 2011. On "looping effects," see Hacking 2000. On virtuously expanding spirals of the common, see Hardt and Negri 2004.

concepts as they have been developed in Marxist traditions. The term "commons" describes things existing in associations of regulated use by groups of human actors, such as anarchist collectives, classroom communities, listserves, class-based networks, and place- and kinship-based communities. The term—originating in pre-industrial societies and recently adopted by social movements from the Zapatistas in Mexico and Landless Workers' Movement in Brazil to advocates of free education, open source computing, and open genetic codes—can potentially include anything from the basic conditions for human existence (such as land, food, water, and housing) to embodied skills, knowledge, and affective relationships. There are two defining features of commons: first, they are in a relationship of *availability for use* by any member of the human group that defines them (as well as possibly by others beyond that group). Second, their use is regulated by the group's *value practices*. Following Massimo de Angelis, I understand "value practices" as:

> those actions and processes, as well as correspondent webs of relations, that are both predicated on a given value system and in turn (re)produce it. These are, in other words, social practices and correspondent relations that articulate individual bodies and the wholes of social bodies *in particular ways*. This articulation is produced by individual singularities discursively selecting what is 'good' and 'bad' within a value system and actually *acting upon this selection.* This action in turn goes through feedback mechanisms across the social body in such a way as to articulate social practices and *constitute* anew these 'goods' and 'bads' or, given the nature of the feedback mechanisms, to set a limit to these 'goods' and 'bads.' (De Angelis 2007, 24)

Through complex, feedback-looping processes the singular members of the group collectively deliberate about, and decide on, how the commons should be used.[92]

[92] "Groups" is used here as an analytical category, for conceptualizing a unit of associated entities. A human group can be a company, a sports team, a dinner-club, etc. Groups can intersect and overlap, and people often identify themselves as members of multiple groups. Groups are not fixed by nature, but expand, contract and change their form over time and, as such, their stability must continually be produced.

To bring this down from a level of high abstraction, I will give some historical examples of the value practices of the commons. In opposition to the 'official' histories (written from pro-capitalist perspectives) that sought to delegitimize the way of life around the commons as 'wasteful' and 'inefficient,' J.M. Neeson's account of the practices of commoners in the 17th to 19th centuries in England unearths thorough evidence of the careful ordering of the common land that they undertook in order to strike a balance "between the good upkeep of the pasture and its maximum use" (Neeson 1993, 110). Commoners engaged in a plethora of value practices to order, maintain, and regulate their commons for this value of balance, interrelated with other values that constituted the commoners' way of life. Their value practices included: "stinting," i.e., setting explicit limits on the number of animals that could graze on a commons, as well as other practices to prevent over-grazing, including determining the stocking level by "common rights immemorially attached to land or cottage or residency," "the ability of winter animals commoned in summer (levancy and couchancy), or status as a householder or cottager," and making commons "territorially limited to inhabitants of a particular parish or a group of parishes" (113-116). Further practices for communal upkeep of the commons included: "Flexible stints, the supervision of letting common rights or the agisting of cattle and sheep, the organization of sheep folds, and the incorporation of fodder crops," and practices "surrounding drainage, disease, and breeding" (122). A central figure in these value practices were field officers, who acted as both enforcers of norms, such as stints, and mediators of arguments about these norms amongst commoners, e.g., "over a neighbor's ditches and drains" (123). Other practices

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For the concept of 'the group' that I use here, I am drawing on Bruno Latour's theory of "group formation" (Latour 2005).

for enforcing field orders included organizing common grazing to make orders be followed—"juries ordered drifts brands, common herds, cowkeepers, shepherds, and tether-grazing"—and ensuring detection if by-laws are broken: "juries appointed field officers, tried offenders and imposed fines" (134). Commoners implemented practices for preventing abuses of the commons, such as by "organizing grazing with regular drifts, brands and common herds to make the offences difficult to commit," but when major points of conflict between commoners arose, they sometimes appealed to manorial courts to mediate conflicts by appointing supervisory officers and imposing fines" (138). Argument and negotiation were essential elements in upholding the commoners' communal ethos around the basic agricultural law of "feeding the land in order to feed oneself," and for defining their relationships of community and interdependence (153-4).[93]

Despite the importance of humans' communication in these value practices, rather than imposing modernist assumptions on their practices that would see the values of the commons as purely human-made, the commoners also perceived central roles for non-human animals, bacteria, plants, and soil in their value practices—e.g.:

> Sheep in particular were away from their owners' pens and closes for long and continuous periods, spending both day and night on the commons. What they took from it was matched by the value their manure returned to the pasture, especially when they were folded within hurdles and moved over the fields from week to week. Long folds also firmed the surface of the land, trod in the manure, and killed the weeds. (118-9)

[93] On the importance of argument and negotiation for commoners: "Negotiation was as vital to common-field agriculture as pasture itself: commoners could do little without it. To sow the fallow, to lay down balks, to reduce stints, to prosecute overstockers, they had to discuss, negotiate and make agreements." (153) "Argument, then, far from preventing the effective regulation of agriculture, is an index of the degree of connection and interdependence in a common-field village—an index of its shared life—and a way to resolve disputes. If common-field villagers did not argue, then they did not need or depend on one another." (154)

Likewise, commoners saw animals' production of manure as crucial in their value practices, particularly through their recycling nitrogen (113). Commoners also saw non-human animals as playing negative roles in their value practices, particularly the importance of bacteria, rats, tics, etc in spreading diseases, which were essential for commoners to consider in their enacting practices for preventing their spread, such as drainage and ditches (128). Commoners had a feeling of belonging with the land, a "possession of a landscape"; as the "human fauna," they lived with the land's "seasons, they knew its history and its geography, they felt a sense of belonging in the routines of every day spent on it" (179).

This holistic way of life of the commoners—in intimate, complex relations with assemblages of traditions, regulations, land, buildings, water, plants, and non-human animals—was continually brought into question and challenged by actors promoting alternative ways of life, particularly from the 16th to the 19th centuries with the rise of interconnected regimes of colonialism, capitalism, education, and the state. With the rise of a proto-capitalist class, the expansion of the capitalist mode of life motivated its agents to systematic confrontations with the commoners' mode of life, deploying the main mechanisms— parliamentary enclosure and land consolidation—that would destroy the value practices of common right that had maintained the commons (Neeson 1993, 108). Viewing these historical transformations from a global, transnational perspective, the proto-capitalist forces destroying the commons in England must be seen in co-constitutive relations with the forces of colonialism and the Atlantic slave trade between Africa, the Americas, and the Europe (Williams 1944; Blackburn 2011). The expansion of the slave plantation in the Americas fed into the rise of capitalist industrialization,

giving "momentum in Britain to a dual process of 'primitive accumulation,' on the one hand separating labourers from the land (by enclosure and 'improvement') and on the other using the super-profits of slavery to finance the expansion of industry and credit," and conversely, "capitalism and consumer appetites drove enslavement and the invention of a new type of plantation" (Blackburn 2011; 100). Transformations in modes of labor and consumption are bound up with each other, as the new goods produced through slavery—especially tobacco, coffee, cotton, and sugar—were "baiting the hook of wage dependence" for the English consumers, including the commoners, who came to desire them (102).[94] Thus, when trying to understand the origin of the forces that destroyed the commoners' way of life, taking a transnational view allows us to see how forces that superficially appear to be benign—English consumers' desires for the new goods—are connected via supply chains to the violence of enslavement of African peoples and their forced labor to produce those goods. 'Distancing effects' similar to what I discussed in the Introduction, in relation to contemporary consumers' obliviousness to their consumption's co-constitution with the exploitation of distant laborers, were crucial enabling conditions for the rise of capitalism and New World slavery—a "structure of serial alienation" that "obscures oppressive processes of production" (94).

Traditional, pro-capitalist accounts of the history of enclosure tend to avoid mentioning any accounts of its violence, and while Marxist, anti-capitalist accounts do

[94] In Blackburn's historical account of the mutual ties between the rises of New World slavery and capitalism, he argues that: "slave plantation growth itself fed back into capitalist and industrial advance in Britain by furnishing novel incentives, wider markets, premium commodities, sources of capital and raw materials. The plantation colonies supplied the metropolis with a growing stream of popular luxuries and cotton, a crucial industrial input. The availability of tobacco, brightly coloured cotton goods, sweetened beverages, cakes and preserves, helped to tempt Britons into greater participation in market exchanges and greater reliance on wages, salaries and fees. Baiting the hook of wage dependence, new consumption goods helped to motivate the 'industrious revolution,' that is, the greater regularity, longer hours and reduced holidays that accompanied, and sometimes preceded, the new manufacturing methods." (Blackburn 2011, 102; citing De Vries, 1993)

focus on the violence of enclosure, they tend to confine their focus within the national boundaries of England. Beginning from the latter's theories on the violence of enclosure, we can eventually elaborate on them for an account that expands trans-nationally to interrelate this transformation with the violence of colonialism and slavery. Various forms of violence—and affects and discourses that serve to legitimate or mask that violence—short-circuit commoners' continual political task of composing their communal way of life, thereby enabling the enclosure of the commons. Marx saw the violence of enclosure, or what becomes "primitive accumulation" in the 15th century, as taking two intertwined forms: first, the violence of expropriation, i.e., ripping producers away from the means of production, particularly the land, and second, the violence of the "bloody legislation," i.e., legal acts and penal regimes that dealt with the newly property-less, "free workers" by criminalizing and controlling their attempts to survive as vagabonds, robbers, and beggars, thereby, forcing them into productive work in the new factories as part of a controlled and contained "working class" (Read 2002, 39).[95] Primitive accumulation is a transformed kind of violence, "from the sporadic and excessive feudal forms into the universality of law and the bourgeois state," and it "disappears into the silent compulsion of economic relations," such as in the order and discipline of the factory. From the perspective of the value practices of the commons the violence of expropriation of land and criminalization of vagabondage appears as violent,

[95] Forms of enclosure pre-date the forms that it takes in "primitive accumulation" from the 15th century and on, as the processes that create the pre-conditions of the capitalist mode of production—'pre-conditions' both in the sense of a prelude to its rise and during its prevalence, for its expansion and intensification (De Angelis 2007). According to Jesse Goldstein: "When the Statute of Merton authorized the enclosure of manorial waste lands in 1235, it required that the lord doing the enclosing leave sufficient commons to provide for his tenants' subsistence, insuring that commoners would not be completely separated from their means of production and reproduction. Most historians, Marx included, agree that it was not until the fifteenth century that enclosure took its infamous form as a mechanism of dispossession and agrarian change." (Goldstein 2013, 360)

but from the perspective of the new order of expanding wage relations it disappears into the "normal" working of institutions, states, and markets.

The means of 'disappearing' this violence include the complicity of consumers through their desiring the products of colonialist capitalism and becoming enchanted through commodity fetishism, as well as certain narratives that obscure and legitimate the violence of enclosure. One such narrative battle is around 'the nation': where earlier defenses of commons deployed 'the nation'—arguing that "'the true interest of a nation' was served by a society in which most people could live without wages," and that enclosure led to depopulation, "which would destroy the basis of both national and local wealth"—later, from the 1760s and on, their opponents picked up the narrative and twisted it in a way that made it both a critique of commons and a legitimation of enclosure as serving the 'national interest' (Neeson 1993, 7, 22, 25, 46). A second narrative struggle is around the moral characteristics of people: defenders of commoners criticized dependence on a wage as well as the enclosers' greed, while enclosers criticized commoners for dependence on the land, idleness, laziness, primitiveness (including colonialist framings of them in terms of 'race' and 'savagery'), and the Malthusian ideology that distrusted the moral capacities of the poor to care for and 'improve' their land (28, 31, 34, 39-40, 46). To the extent that the latter narratives were successful, they not only legitimated enclosure but also contributed to constructing subjectivities of *homo economicus.*

Another key terrain of narrative struggle is around 'waste' and 'value.' These narratives partly overlapped with those around personal morality: e.g., equating the 'idleness' of commoners with a 'waste of time' and 'inefficient' (40). But, more than

focusing on the commoners' bodies, these narratives also referred to the land. The commoners' and their defenders' narratives about their ways of life exhibited relatively more of what Walter Mignolo calls a "body-and-place particular epistemology," in contrast with how the enclosers' narratives demonstrated more of a "zero-point epistemology" (Mignolo 2012). The commoners' way of interacting with and describing their land demonstrated a differentiating concern about the heterogeneity of valuable things and activities in places that they more generally referred to as 'common wastes' or 'waste lands' in comparison with the relatively more cultivatable 'common fields' or 'open fields' on which their cattle and sheep grazed. The 'waste lands' included "the balks between cultivated strips in an arable field, the spaces lining pathways and roads, or entire fields and forests without other designation" (Goldstein 2013, 364). Despite the geographic marginality of these spaces they had economic centrality for the commoners, as the commoners—especially the poor, women, and children—found value in them from useful products, raw materials, fuel, and means of exchange that constituted a "network of mutuality" and gift-giving, with "gifts of things like blackberries, dandelion wine, jam, or labour in carrying home wood or reeds" (Neeson 1993, 159).

In the enclosers' narratives, these value practices on the 'common wastes' were ignored. As the emerging rural professional class was committed to enclosure and 'improvement' of the common lands, a key trick in their narrative practices that degraded the common right economy as a whole was to conflate 'common wastes' and 'common fields' into a single category of 'wasted commons' (Goldstein 2013, 366). This conflated category allowed the enclosers to avoid engaging in controversies about the relative value of different parts and aspects of the land, and instead to declare the whole of the

commons as that which was seen as 'unimproved' and, thus, as 'waste' in general, but also holding within them "the potential to be improved"—as a potential source of wealth for 'the nation' (not for the commoners).

Surveyors measured this potential value in the form of "potential yields" of the land, but defenders of the commons objected to their measurements as always estimating the common rights values too low (Goldstein 2013, 367). In their objections, a second meaning of 'waste' in the commoners' regime of value is seen: 'wastage,' or "the process of laying waste," as the "exhaustion of another person's use-right," i.e., of a specific, particular political right, such as in the case of "a tree felled or stone quarried in defiance of common right … even if that tree was subsequently put to profitable use" (367-8). By contrast, in the enclosers' capitalist regime of value, 'wastage' was transformed "from a political (and particular) to an economic (and general) offense)," in relation to the proclaimed violation of "an abstract market principle" (368). Waste as "the abrogation of abstract value" becomes a dual injunction that flattens the commoners' diverse, heterogeneous valuing and wasting practices while also ripping their world in two by boxing their bodies and their land into two separate, abstract categories: thereby, constructing *homo economicus* and *terra economicus,* respectively—both seen as "part of the universal field of wasted potential."

In these narrative battles between defenders of the commons and the enclosers, all of their discourses of waste are deployed in and through the common, but I draw a key difference between them using Casarino's distinction between 'surplus value' and 'surplus common.' The defenders of the commons, who are non-capitalist, generally do not have a driving motivation of the accumulation of surplus value, and thus, they tend to

make arguments that figure surplus, such as '*waste'* in relation to the commons, in the forms of surplus common. That is, they see this surplus as having the potential for being associated with a manifold variety of value practices, open to being determined through the commoners' designation of whether and how it has value (or not) through their communication and study in the common. The defenders of the commons were attempting to defer questions of the value of the commons back to the commoners' own continual flow of communication and study about particular political rights in relation to their particular bodies, land, animals, plants, water, etc. By contrast, the defenders of enclosure, motivated by the desire to accumulate surplus value as capital, when faced with the surplus of the commons, not only ignored and denied the already existing ways in which commoners were enacting value practices through that surplus, but also designate these 'wasted commons' as a blank space holding the potential for producing surplus value, for an abstract market economy, if the commoners' way of life were to be replaced with an 'improved' agricultural regime. In order to short-circuit the commoners' flow of communication and study through which they constituted their value practices, the enclosers paved the way for the capitalist regime of value via various delegitimizing, simplifying discourses, violences, and exclusion (by both the commoners' defenders and the enclosers) of the commoners themselves from participation in the discussions.[96]

[96] On the latter point, J.M. Neeson's analysis of historical accounts shows that, not only did Parliament ignore commoners' petitions and enclosers refused to talk with commoners, but also defenders of the commons failed to amplify the voices of commoners and to "advocate for self-determination" (Neeson 1993, 218, 40, 52). "Nothing in their descriptions of commoners suggests that they thought commoners were equals. If commoners were honest and hardworking, they were also simple, innocent, uncorrupted rustics with strong bodies and English hearts. These are the best qualities of good subordinates but — despite their petty landholding and common right — not the qualities of informed citizens. In ignoring the possibility of self-determination, and in keeping commoners themselves out of the public debate, the defenders of commons ensured the end of the enclosure debate between pamphleteers, in Parliament and at the Board of Agriculture." (52)

Although the struggles between commoners and enclosers in 15th to 19th century England have particularities that cannot be generalized to other historical and geographical situations, I argue—following Massimo de Angelis (2007) and others—that theorizing some of the key features of these struggles can provide useful guidance for contemporary movements. Enclosure begins when commons are identified as a *limit* to capitalist accumulation. The value practices of the group associated with these commons are then destabilized through violent means, leading to a conflict over the re-stabilization of capitalist and non-capitalist value practices. Once existing commons are destabilized, the formation of capital relations requires the creation and stabilization of a *separation* between producers and means of production. Since the struggle between the stabilization of capitalist relations and the stabilization of the commons takes place in and through the common, it can potentially continue indefinitely, with oscillation and feedback between the different dimensions of the enclosure process. On the one hand, if the relationships of collective and commons re-stabilize around separations between the human group as "producers" and the resources as "means of production," then enclosure is complete and the pre-conditions are made for accumulating surplus value as capital—at least until challenged by groups formed in opposition to this arrangement. On the other hand, if the relationships re-stabilize around associations of the group and resources as a collective, with commons mediated by the group's own value practices, continually re-circulating surplus as 'surplus common,' then enclosure fails, until—once again—these commons become identified as a limit to capital and are targeted for enclosure.

The question I explore here is how the imaginal machines of 'commons' and 'enclosure'—if subscribed to and interpreted in certain ways—can enact performative

effects for movements of ‘within and against’ // ‘with and for.’ Generally, I see two potential uses of them. First, they can serve to deactivate people’s subscriptions to the capitalist fantasy of capital’s identity with the common and substitute for it a qualitative difference between capital and the common. Narratives of ‘enclosure,’ or ‘primitive accumulation,’ describe genealogies of the creation of capitalist relations, i.e., the construction of a new relationship of separation between producers and means of production (De Angelis 2007). Such narratives can debunk claims of stable indistinguishability between capital and the common (such as produced through commodity fetishism of oneself and things), and thereby, they can show the contingency and mutability of capitalist relations. Further, versions of such narratives can be articulated in ways that are better or worse for these purposes. Better narratives (such as the sources I have drawn on above) will highlight the ways in which the history of the construction of enclosures involved powerful forces winning the struggle with commoners through the former deploying methods that could be judged (by a contemporary audience of these narratives) as ‘bad’ in some way—e.g., calling them unethical, amoral, or unjust, for such reasons as the enclosers’ use of violence and of simplifications in their legitimating discourses. Also, such ‘better’ narratives should not merely set up a Manichean view of ‘bad’ enclosers vs. ‘good’ commoners, but also dive into the various ways in which the defenders of commons were ‘wrong’ or ‘made mistakes’—e.g., how defenders used the ‘national interest’ frame in a way that was easily co-opted by the enclosers and how they ‘spoke for’ the commoners rather than facilitating their self-determination.

Second, for the performative effect of producing the desire to be in common—both fostering this desire where it already exists and producing such a desire where it does not—I propose deploying narratives of 'the commons,' which project imaginal trajectories of 'alternatives' or 'outsides' to capitalist relations. Commons and enclosure are two different modes of collection and composition of relations amongst people, land, and things.[97] In commons, the latter are collected together and their relations are composed through humans subscribing to (and being made to subscribe to) certain norms, i.e., through their participation in groups' value practices. Although the usual interpretation of commons assumes that these are non-capitalist value practices, there is nothing inherent in the concept of commons that prevents these from being capitalist value practices, which would then make them 'capitalist commons'—and hence, the need for continually re-positing the capital-vs-common distinction, which will be explored further in the next section.[98] Yet, the key (relative) difference of such a capitalist commons from enclosure is that, in the former, the humans involved take relatively more agency in imposing the capitalist value practices on themselves, while enclosure entails the creation of conditions that facilitate the imposition of capitalist relations onto people.[99]

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[97] I draw from Bruno Latour the concepts of "collection" and "composition" as the two main processes of politics across the so-called 'modern' division of nature and society (Latour 2005).
[98] For one critical analysis of capitalist uses of 'commons,' see Caffentzis, 2004.
[99] An example of this, which will be elaborated in more depth in Chapter 4, is of students with neoliberal capitalist subjectivities collaborating on their schoolwork in a university commons time-space (e.g., an open space with tables, chairs, a water fountain, and free wifi internet). They bring their subscription to capitalist value practices with them to the commons and they choose to use the surplus of their cooperative activity, such as their affective relationships, as means for their own advancement in their classes and careers as self-entrepreneurs. Here I am highlighting the capitalist commons aspect of this example, but it is more complex than this for, as I will elaborate later, this situation entails enclosures in composition with commons of different, conflicting types.

Such imposition is enabled because, in enclosure, two *separate* collections are composed—humans as individualized producers and things as means of production. The compositions of these two groups, and the relationship of separation between them, are the pre-conditions for capitalist relations. This relation of separation (of having nothing in common) enables new relations between them to be mediated by the value practices of capitalism: the accumulation of surplus value, market exchange, private property, wage relations, class hierarchy, commodification, commodity fetishism, the division of labor, the construction of human bodies as *homo economicus* and of land as *terra economicus*, etc.[100] Viewing this enclosure process through the lens of the capitalist fantasy, the impetus for enclosure—i.e., the historical agency behind it—comes from capitalism itself, from its creatively destructive, expansive tendency. In opposition, viewed through the lens of an anti-capitalist narrative (e.g., one general variety of it, often associated with autonomist Marxism), enclosure, as the creeping edge of the expansive tendency of capitalism, results from working class struggles exposing capitalism's internal contradictions and pushing it into crises that it attempts to resolve through incorporating its 'outsides.'[101]

Deploying any of these narratives takes place *in and through the common*—i.e., the conditions and means of communication. My key argument for understanding the interrelations of the commons and the common is that the value practices of the commons—i.e., the communal norms of relating between humans and things—are part of the common. The practices of communication for creating and maintaining the norms of

[100] Although many of these constituent elements of capitalism have existed prior to, and geographically outside of, capital as a mode of production and regime of value, the enclosure process facilitates the interrelating, expansion, and intensification of all of these constituent elements.
[101] For examples of such autonomist Marxist views on history as driven by working class struggles to which capital responds, see De Angelis 2007; Hardt and Negri 2000; 2004; 2009.

the commons—e.g., as in the commoners' practices of discussing them, deciding on them, circulating them, subscribing to them, interpreting them, arguing and negotiating over them, enforcing them, and following them—are both mediated by the common and productive of it. Yet, there is not some kind of magic symbiosis between the commons and the common; rather, the creation of separations of enclosure also takes place in and through the common. Enclosure's separation is motivated and legitimated through humans' subscription to certain narratives, including various capitalist ideologies, such as those of 'the white man's burden,' 'manifest destiny,' 'the free market,' 'meritocracy,' 'the tragedy of the commons,' 'development,' etc. These narratives, if subscribed to, can short-circuit the continual study and communication that constitutes the value practices of the commons. Further, these subscriptions are always forced by other entities, including actions that could be framed as 'violent' though legitimizing narratives that also suppress the appearance of this violence—and their subsequent subscriptions to capitalist value practices also take place through the common. Their propensity to subscribe to these legitimizing discourses is not merely forced by their negatively affective fears of violence, as that would make this a circular explanation. Also, other forces—such as desires for consumer products like sugar, tobacco, coffee, and cotton from the global capitalist, colonial market—create positive affects and fleeting pleasures that increase the commoners' propensity to accept such discourses that legitimize the perpetuation of this global regime and that distracts them from considering the possible wrongness of its many associated forms of violence. Thus, by producing and circulating the common, people can collect and compose themselves in relation to each other and things *as* commons—*or* they can collect and compose themselves as separated from each other and

things, through enclosure processes. Whether or not one or the other of these imaginal trajectories is followed—creating commons or enclosure—is always an *open question*, dependent on whether or not, through positing the difference between the common and capital, surplus is pushed toward its reclamation and recirculation as surplus common and away from its recuperation as surplus value.[102]

Theorizing this relation between the common and the commons—how the value practices of the commons are contingently constructed in and through the common—helps combat against simplifying critiques of the commons that portray them as 'natural.' Human beings co-participate along with non-human actors in the construction of the commons, and they can continue to do so without theorizing their norms in any explicit way, whether as 'the common' or otherwise. Yet, subscribing to a theory that frames these norms as part of 'the common' can give them guidance for how to use imaginal machines of 'the commons' in support of movements of 'within and against' // 'with and for.' This theory-guided organizing becomes especially important with a shift to a post-Fordist regime of capitalist accumulation in which communicative labor becomes more central. In this neoliberal capitalism of the 'information revolution' and 'knowledge society,' capitalism-justifying narratives of 'the commons'—such as the "tragedy of the commons"—become more powerful discursive tools for the recuperation of surplus as surplus value.[103] Likewise, in universities, the language of "commons" is often used to promote practices of "active learning" and "community engagement" that are enmeshed

[102] On "recuperation," see Shukaitis 2009b.
[103] For Hardin's "tragedy of the commons" argument, see Hardin 1968. For critiques of it, see, for example, Cox 1985 and Angus 2008. Ian Angus argues, "Despite being refuted again and again, [Hardin's myth] is still used today to support private ownership and uncontrolled markets as sure-fire roads to economic growth."

with capitalist value practices.[104] For understanding these processes as part of a terrain of struggle, better guidance can be formed from a theory that articulates concepts of the common and commons/enclosure in relation to communal norms for regulating the commons and to the legitimizing discourses for enclosure.

It is crucial to see any uses of 'commons' and 'enclosure'—and the narratives associated with them—as fantasies or 'imaginal machines' that are themselves communicated and, thus, part of the common. Otherwise, one can get caught up in a kind of "wishful thinking" that neglects the gap between fantasy and reality, and thereby, one's communicative practices can become recuperated into the capitalist fantasy.[105] As a general heuristic for maintaining a view of them as fantasies, or imaginal machines, consider the ways in which the fantasy always falls short of reality in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Spatially, any particular attempt to create a commons (or to narrate a pre-existing commons becoming enclosed) is necessarily marginal within the wider capitalist system, at least in those places that are dominated by the capitalist regime of value, which relies on people's subscriptions to the capitalist fantasy of the universality of value and the commodity form (i.e., the fantasy that anything and everything can be defined in terms of a value that is commensurable with the value of any other thing and, thus, can be bought and sold for that value as a commodity within a market economy). Temporally, any such attempt also must grapple with capitalist relations that endure from past actualizations of surplus as surplus value, such as from having been disciplined into people's bodies (e.g., desires to accumulate capital through competition, to obey

[104] For a cursory piece of evidence to support this claim, a Google search for "active learning" and "commons" turned up 163,000 results, and a search for "community engagement" and "commons" produced 2,900,000 results (Google search, 3/19/13).
[105] On "wishful thinking," see Geuss 2010.

authority figures, and to consume commodities from the global market) and institutionalized in configurations of things (e.g., factories with managerial surveillance and divisions of labor built onto the shopfloor; likewise, schools designed as factories with Taylorist management practices). Combining these reflections, even if a temporary commons is performed, the participants feel many pressures to retain their dispositions for figuring surplus as 'surplus value,' especially to the extent that they anticipate their insertion into the wider capitalist system of competition for scarce waged jobs to earn money to pay for the commodified necessities of life. This system entails the real, institutionalized effects of people having believed in, desired, and acted out the capitalist fantasy for a long time.

(3) Positing Further Distinctions: Types of Commons

Considering the ubiquity of these limiting conditions on communicative acts of deploying and subscribing to the imaginal machines of commons and enclosure for purposes of guiding movements of 'within and against' // 'with and for,' those who deploy them need to ask questions of whether their use produces such effects successfully. One key way to articulate these questions is through positing the capital-vs-common distinction again, in a qualitatively more precise way: not only differentiating between enclosure and commons but also between different types of commons, and problematizing the extent to which they are tied up with capitalism and other systems of domination that intersect with capitalism. Seeing the value practices of the commons as taking place in and through the common, questions of the ways that commons of various types—e.g., colonial vs. indigenous, patriarchal vs. feminist, white supremacist vs. anti-

racist, statist vs. anarchist, heteronormative vs. queer, etc.—are symbiotic, or in conflict, with capitalism can be discussed. Surprisingly, in most Marxist and anarchist communication about the commons, these questions tend to be neglected, perhaps influenced by a disposition of class reductionism. Thereby, the commons are often elevated as an unalloyed good. For an antidote to these simplifying approaches, I draw on and expand Allen Greer's history of "conflicting commons" to theorize the many ways in which most kinds of commons are tied up with systems of domination, division, and oppression, and thus, become co-constitutive with enclosure and capitalist value practices (Greer 2012).

The dichotomy of commons and enclosure is one that leftists have often used to frame critiques of capitalism and colonialism. Yet, it is problematic for them to merely take up this dichotomy uncritically, because the same dichotomy has been used by liberal capitalists—from John Locke and his predecessors to contemporary defenders of 'property rights' for economic development—as a legitimation for (neo)-colonial capitalism.[106] Many leftists take up this dichotomy, including Locke's equation of colonization with enclosure, while reversing the valuations of commons and enclosure. Allan Greer, a historian of indigenous peoples and settler colonialism, argues that,

> the association of 'commons' with the poor in England and the Indians in America, not to mention its overtones of sharing and cooperation, can lead to a romantic view that emphasizes the *collective* aspects of communing to the neglect of the *exclusive* nature of most commons known to history. Thus the political thrust of Locke's essay 'Of Property' is inverted as the commons and unenclosed

[106] See John Locke's chapter 'On Property' in his *Two Treatises Concerning Government* (Locke 1690). For a contemporary liberal defender of private property rights as key for development, see Hernando de Soto, *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else* (de Soto 2000).

> 'America' are idealized rather than denigrated, but the basic understanding of colonization is still traceable to Locke. (Greer 2012, 386)[107]

As an antidote to this problem, Greer gives a critical genealogy of the concept of 'commons': he rejects the kind of colonialist ideology that frames commons in America in terms of a 'universal open commons,' in favor of a more nuanced theory of commons, exploring "the ways in which different property systems, each with its particular practices of communing, confronted one another in unequal struggle."

Locke describes America as a kind of commons of universal scope, what contemporary scholars term 'open-access resources,' which are portions of the environment that are not property, as opposed to particular commons, which "are jointly owned and, in most cases, collectively managed" (368). In the Old World, the commons "might be thought of as both a place—the village pasture—and as a set of access rights, such as gleaning and stubble grazing," which corresponds to an "inner commons," "located in the tillage zone of a given community," which Greer distinguishes from an "outer commons," "the collectively owned resources in the surrounding area beyond the cropland" (369). These commons were not simply open to all, but rather "a variety of rules and customs, some of them local, others regional or national, governed access to these common resources." The rules and customs are part of what I have been calling the 'value practices' that regulate and maintain commons. In Locke's description of indigenous peoples in America, he erases the distinction between open-access resources and particular commons. Yet, based on many historical studies, we can now see that, although native peoples did not use a language of "commons," varieties of common property—of both the "inner" and "outer" types—were practiced by indigenous peoples

[107] As an example of such leftist invertings of Locke, Greer cites Peter Linebaugh's *The Magna Carta Manifesto: Liberties and Commons for All* (Linebaugh 2008).

all over the Americas.[108] There was a wide variety of these "indigenous commons," in relation to specific features of the indigenous collectivities in different parts of the Americas—"apart from cultivated areas, America was a quilt of native commons, each governed by the land-use rules of a specific human society" (372).

Thus, when Spanish, English, and French colonists arrived, they were confronting a pre-owned continent. Part of this confrontation involved their clearing, plowing, and enclosing of farms, but it also involved creating "colonial commons," of both the "inner" and "outer" varieties. Contrary to the usual narrative of colonization-as-enclosure, the settler version of the "outer commons" with their expansive tendencies were even more threatening than enclosure to the existing indigenous commons. The colonial outer commons served as the leading edge of enclosure, pushed by forces of early capitalism and the imperial nation-state. "What used to be known in the United States as 'the frontier' can be redefined as the zone of conflict between the indigenous commons and the colonial (outer) commons. These two commons were not different places, but rather contending customs and rules regulating the use of a given space and its resources." (376)

Drawing on historical sources, Greer gives many examples of these confrontations of commons.[109] In countless cases across the Americas, roaming

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[108] Greer gives many examples of these "indigenous commons," such as: "Around the great cities of Mesoamerica lay villages and hamlets with intensively cultivated fields, some of the latter belonging to particular households, others owned by temples, local chiefs, or urban nobles and worked by the community. Plots were carefully measured, marked, and recorded; tenure displayed some characteristics associated with enclosed areas of England and some characteristics of what Locke would call legal, particular commons. Thus this can be viewed as a zone of enclosure and 'inner commons.' Beyond the villages and cornfields lay a different kind of commons: the forest or mountains or desert terrain where local people went for firewood, wild herbs and berries, game, and other resources." (369-370)

[109] For example, in Mexico: "Colonization created conditions favorable to the ambitions of ruthless ranchers who were determined to expand their enterprises at the Indians' expense. Attacked by successive waves of epidemic disease, native numbers fell dramatically over the course of the sixteenth century. To make matters worse, great herds of feral cattle and horses spread northward in advance of human conquerors, undermining the fragile ecology, and thus Indian subsistence, in northern New Spain. There was massive dislocation for the survivors, battered by the economic demands of tribute and forced, in some

domesticated animals, particularly the "open-range grazing of herbivores," in the colonial outer commons often destroyed the environment and, hence, the land-based enabling conditions for indigenous peoples to maintain their commons. The colonial commons were in the same overlapping space as the indigenous commons but the colonists tended to follow their own rules for use and only rarely respected the indigenous people's rules, and usually only when it suited their purposes (379). Rather than engaging in arguments and negotiations with indigenous peoples—via the common—about the conflicting value practices of their territorially overlapping commons, the colonists short-circuited such communicative possibilities with violence and delegitimizing discourses, such as racializing them as 'savages' and devaluing their uses of the land as 'wasted.' The imperial expansion of the colonial outer commons, and the colonists' associated *unequal* power over the indigenous peoples, then paved the way for enclosure, along with other means, including violence, disease (which often came from the domesticated animals), and commercial dependence. Under this colonial onslaught, the indigenous people's embodied, communal, ecological, and territorial conditions for maintaining the value practices of their commons were decimated.

Conflicts of the Undercommons

Building on Greer's theory of conflicts between indigenous and colonial commons, I argue that any and every space-time of commons inevitably entails conflicts between different value practices. The extent to which these conflicts are addressed—and how they play out—depends on a wide variety of factors, but whatever the results, they

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cases, to relocate in concentrated settlements called *congregaciones*, the better to administer and Christianize them." (Greer 2012, 378)

have wide-ranging consequences for human attempts to compose the common world in different ways. I argue that to the extent these conflicts unfold in ways that are mediated through continual communication and study—positing surplus as surplus common, as opposed to short-circuiting of this communication by violence and simplifying narratives—greater enabling conditions are created for liberatory, anti-oppressive modes of composing the world. In this final section of the chapter, I draw parallels and continuities from the historical confrontations of colonial and indigenous commons to contemporary battles between: on the one hand, attempts to figure commons with neo-colonial, white supremacist, patriarchal, capitalist, heteronormative value practices and, on the other hand, movements that oppose to them alternative value practices, such as indigeneity, blackness, feminism, mutual aid, and queerness.

One example of such a parallel is the history of conflicts between patriarchal and matriarchal, and/or feminist, value practices in the commons. The most thorough historical account of women's involvement in struggles over commons has been written by Silvia Federici, who argues that a feminist perspective on the commons "begins with the realization that, as the primary subjects of reproductive work, historically and in our time, women have depended on access to communal natural resources more than men and have been most penalized by their privatization and most committed to their defense" (Federici 2010, 5). Going beyond Federici's focus on conflicts between commons and enclosure (or "primitive accumulation"), I argue that these struggles also entail conflicts between different types of commons. For example, women have rules for governing their home sphere and domestic space, which intersects with the space of the 'inner commons,' as opposed to the patriarchal version of the commons controlled by men, which portrays

women as following men's orders and working to serve them, rather than as autonomously governing themselves, the family, and the domestic space. The incursion of the 'patriarchal commons' on the 'matriarchal commons' entails part of the enabling conditions for the creation and entrenchment of a division between 'public' and 'private' spheres that cuts off the continuity between household commons and the commons outside the household—thereby, 'privatizing' the household commons and 'making public' (i.e., enclosing for either state or corporate control) the outside-the-house commons.[110]

For situations in which the commons of conflicting modes of living (e.g., colonial vs. indigenous, patriarchal vs. matriarchal) overlap with each other in space-time, I propose that *'undercommons'* is a useful concept for describing the situation of the commons of the dominated, minor mode of living (e.g., the indigenous, the matriarchal) as caught up in multiple tensions. In order for participants in the minor value practices to fight for their own survival and flourishing, they have to fend off marginalization, recuperation, and assimilation by the dominant, majority mode of living (e.g., the colonial, the patriarchal). The 'under-' part of the 'undercommons' concept partly refers to the situation of being on the bottom of a hierarchy, as well as seeking to *under*mine that hierarchy. Further, another reference is to how, as a key part of the dominated group's fight for survival, maintenance, and expansion of their mode of living with and representing their commons, they need to grapple with tensions around their involvement

[110] In an extension of my project, I will elaborate this argument further in relation to education, pursuing the question: what is the relation between this patriarchal commons and the creation of educational commons? For example, does it serve to negate the educational potential of the learning and teaching that happens in the household through women's caring labor and study (cf. critiques of schooling by homeschoolers and deschoolers)? Conversely, how does it participate in the formation of an individualized self in the public sphere, passing through levels of education to become 'independent' in dichotomous contrast with figures of 'dependency,' such as the housewife and the dropout?

in different practices of representation and recognition.[111] One side of these tensions is from desires for evading (i.e., remaining *under* or outside of) representation within the dominant group's mode of policing and enforcing the norms of its commons. Another side of the tensions is from engaging with—i.e., selectively accepting, modifying, or rejecting—the dominant group's mode of representing their commons, so as to navigate some kind of movement of association for either exiting from, or co-existing in, the space-time of the land and bodies on and through which their commons' overlap.

To flesh out this concept of undercommons further, I describe here how I consider participants in the indigenous commons to be engaged in an undercommons situation. During colonial times, the indigenous peoples' claims and rules for exclusive rights to their commons were not recognized in the dominant, colonist-controlled regimes of representation. Hence, there was, and still is, a struggle over their representation and legitimacy. With the power imbalance, the colonizers' state administrations made laws that suited their purposes. The indigenous people were called upon to make their own rules legible to the colonizers' government, but doing so would require them, implicitly or explicitly, to recognize the legitimacy of the colonizers' rule and to assimilate their rules within the colonizers' codes of governance. Even if they did submit their rules to the colonizers' mode of representation, the colonists could "ignore their own laws and customs when it suits them" (Greer 2012, 379). Thus, to the extent that they recognized how this game of representation was rigged against them, the indigenous peoples needed to engage in an undercommons and "minor politics" sort of struggle (Thoburn 2002). Seeing the indigenous peoples' commons as co-constituted with a different, minor mode

[111] To flesh out this theory further, I need to engage with political theorists' debates around representation, recognition, and redistribution (e.g., the writings of Nancy Fraser, Axel Honneth, and Patchen Markell).

of living, for their survival they resisted assimilation into the colonists' major mode of living—maneuvering the value practices of their commons 'under' the colonists modes of representation—while also trying to subvert the marginalization that includes the destruction of their commons. A crucial way in which indigenous peoples attempted to navigate these tensions in ways that could maintain their value practices was through indigenous practices of collective study. Conversely, a principal means for colonists to destroy the indigenous modes of life was to outlaw indigenous study and to to force indigenous people into the assimilating education-based regime of study, such as with "boarding schools" (Smith 2005; Szasz 2007).

In addition to theorizing clashes between indigenous and colonial commons and between patriarchal and matriarchal commons, many other historical and contemporary struggles can be illuminated through this theoretical lens. For example, in the struggles of enslaved Africans, the maroon communities of escaped slaves can be seen as creating a kind of undercommons with relations of minor resistance to the white supremacist, capitalist, colonialist commons on the slave plantations—relations which were sustained through the informal networks of communication, cooperation, and study of enslaved and fugitive African workers. In chapter 3, I theorize this example of *marronage* as undercommons in more depth, as a test for how my theory can offer descriptions of the full complexity of a historical movement that grappled with the tensions between struggling 'within and against' and 'with and for.' Building on the theory of commons, the common, and undercommons, in the next Chapter I complement it with critical perspectives on coloniality/modernity that I draw from historical and contemporary movements of exodus, abolitionism, and decolonization. I describe how these movements

entail intertwined practices of resistance, evasion, communication, study, and the creation of, and conflicts over, different types of commons. In a critical engagement with the abolitionist movement and their neglect of practices of *marronage*, I highlight the ways in which retaining the modernist/colonialist ideals, particularly in narratives around education, and their de-legitimizing discourses, such as with narratives of 'waste,' obscure the centrality of alternative regimes of study in such movements.

Chapter 3

From Marronage to Zapatismo:
Study in the Undercommons of Exodus, Decoloniality, & Abolitionism

> *Worry about the university*. This is the injunction today in the United States, one with a long history. Call for its restoration like Harold Bloom or Stanley Fish or Gerald Graff. Call for its reform like Derek Bok or Bill Readings or Cary Nelson. Call out to it as it calls to you. But for the subversive intellectual, all of this goes on upstairs, in polite company, among the rational men. After all, the subversive intellectual came under false pretenses, with bad documents, out of love. Her labor is as necessary as it is unwelcome. The university needs what she bears but cannot bear what she brings. And on top of all that, she disappears. She disappears into the underground, **the downlow lowdown maroon community of the university**, into the Undercommons of Enlightenment, where the work gets done, where the work gets subverted, where the revolution is still black, still strong.
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> – Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, "The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses" (2004 – **emphasis added**)

An initial spur to engage in critical inquiries is often a basic sense of unease, a feeling expressed in the simple claim that 'something is wrong with the world.' This oft-repeated statement seems uncontroversial, yet we dive into endless controversies when asked to describe what it is that we see as wrong and how we should address those wrongs. Unfortunately, most people tend to avoid the more serious of these controversies because they use a language that carries certain limiting assumptions to describe what is wrong with the world. Particularly, these are assumptions of the projects of modernity and its intertwined logic of coloniality, which centrally include the dichotomous concepts of 'nature' vs. 'society,' 'time' vs. 'space,' and 'traditional'/ 'primitive' vs. 'modern'/'civilized' (Latour 1993; Mignolo 2011). Using these concepts to frame descriptions of what is wrong with the world, they conjure a simplifying imaginary that allows many important controversies to be avoided—especially around interpretations of phenomena that blur these dichotomies. A key historical (and ongoing) example is that Western, specifically Spanish, colonialists claimed to have an epistemic superiority over

indigenous peoples that rested (and still rests) upon using these dichotomies to justify ignoring and de-valuing Incan indigenous people's use of the concept of *Pachamama*—which mixes nature and society, space and time—as a basis for constructing Incan knowledge and for organizing their modes of living; "that idea was destroyed by the rhetoric of modernity in order to build the logic of coloniality justifying actions over the 'barbarians' later on translated into 'primitives'" (Mignolo 2011, 172).

These controversy-suppressing, modernist/colonial assumptions of 'time' as linear and of 'societies' as separated from 'nature,' and developing along this line of time from 'traditional'/'primitive' to 'modern'/'civilized,' make it appear easier to give prescriptions for how we should address what is wrong in the world. The forms for the scope and rate of change seem quantifiable—on a scale between 'reform' and 'revolution'—and an ideal end-point is already assumed to be known: modernity, whatever that is imagined to entail, given the particular society's current conditions and the possibilities for changing them through modernization, colonization, and/or development. Similar to the latter concepts, both 'reform' and 'revolution' are "engrained in a linear concept of history and of time, and in an epistemology based on a logic in which dichotomies are always in contrary or contradictory relations; they are never complementary" (158). For this reason, if one would like to step away from the assumptions of modernity/coloniality in order to find some problems with that very project, one also needs to step away from the concepts of 'reform' and 'revolution' and to find some alternative concepts for describing ways of changing the world. One possible approach to finding alternative concepts is to examine indigenous traditions of knowledge. For example, the Quechua-Aymara word *Pachakuti* could be seen as

somewhat related to 'revolution,' as it was used to describe the Spanish conquest, and it could be interpreted as "the disturbing alteration of the order of things." But, to subsume *Pachakuti* under the "linear concept of history and time" partly implied in 'revolution' would be a mistake, neglecting how it "belongs to an imaginary of cyclical repetitions and regular transformations of the natural/social world." This concept allows us to see the limits of the modernist concept of 'revolution' (which is a secular version of the concept of 'final judgment' from Christian cosmology). The modernist concept of 'revolution' also partly implies a sense of "cyclical time" (considering that it comes from the Latin, *revolver*, 'to come around'), as well as a sense of "phase time," but these are cycles and phase shifts adjoined to a chronological, linear timescale, which is used normatively to measure the developmental, civilizational scale of progress of 'societies' towards greater 'modernity.'[112]

My project is inspired by the ability of this indigenous concept, as well as others such as *Pachamama,* to show the limits of modernist assumptions. Yet, I do not aim simply to take up these concepts and try to introduce them into contemporary academic discourses, because that could mire my project in neo-colonialist cultural appropriation and would be a frustrating attempt to apply ideas in a historical-geographic context that is radically different from those in which they were born. Instead, I seek to reconstruct a conceptual apparatus with approximately similar meanings, using more popular, already-in-circulation vocabulary of American English, culled from traditions of struggle, and in relation to the contemporary struggles and places—American universities and surrounding metropolitan areas—out of which my project has emerged.

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[112] For a theory of the different articulations of these modes of temporality—linear, cyclical, and phase—in different historical, geographic, political-economic contexts, see De Angelis 2007.

For this purpose I draw on the theoretical tools created in traditions of struggle that have situated themselves simultaneously, to varying extents, within and against modernity/coloniality, especially the movement traditions of decolonization, anarchism, Black Radicalism, feminism, Marxism, queer liberation, and Zapatismo. As substitutes for the simplifying modernist language of 'reform' and 'revolution,' I use the more nuanced language of decolonization, abolition, exodus, the common, commons, and undercommons, some of which I developed in the previous chapter and which I will elaborate further below.

Examining the concepts of *Pachamama* and *Pachakuti* reveals colonial differences that are constructed in the project of modernity/coloniality, whereby these indigenous concepts and their accompanying epistemologies are placed on the de-legitimated 'tradition/primitive' side of the colonial difference, in subordinated contrast with the 'modern/civilized.' From the original formulation of these colonial (and imperial) differences in the canonical work of Francisco de Vitoria to their placement in the foundations of liberal political theory by Hugo Grotius and John Locke, we see the lines of colonial differences tracing "the separation between 'humanitas' and 'anthropos,'" making the lines "appear neutral and objective," thereby mutually constituting "the epistemic colonial difference supported by the ontological colonial difference: Indians do not think, therefore they are ontological inferior human beings, and whatever they do is assumed to be doing without thinking, or at best, of doing and thinking wrongly or deficiently" (Mignolo 2011, 90, 88). Simultaneously inspired by the descriptive power of these indigenous concepts and frustrated by the modernist/colonialist project's de-legitimating of them via its discourse of the colonial

difference, I affiliate my project with a longer tradition and movement of projects that seeks to de-link people from belief in the colonial difference—to commit "epistemological disobedience" against it (Mignolo 2011)—particularly, movements of decolonization. At the same time, I recognize that discourses of the colonial difference, along with interrelated oppressive differences of race, class, gender, and sexuality, have become sedimented into contemporary institutions of the state, economy, education, etc. Thus, I also seek to affiliate my project with movements that have sought both exodus from these institutions as well as struggling for their abolition—and in and through the space-times of places (re)captured with such movements of decolonization, exodus, and abolition, associating with intertwined movements of composition of communal futures alternative to those of the project of modernity/coloniality. Recognizing the incompleteness of *all* of these projects,[113] I align my project with the projects of decolonization/exodus/abolition and composing communal futures and I offer a theory that aims to be useful for them, to articulate better questions about the relations of competition, opposition, and conflict between them and the projects of coloniality/modernity—and to offer tools for undoing systematically the latter's creation of colonial and imperial differences. I wager that militants who are committed to such movements can usefully deploy the theory I am re-constructing from concepts culled from traditions of struggle, such as 'commons' and 'the common.'

[113] Examples of how the abolitionist movement is an incomplete project include its ongoing continuation with critical analysis of the prison-industrial complex, such as in Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow* (2010) and Erica Meiners' *Right to Be Hostile* (2007), and resistance movements against it with the Critical Resistance and Anarchist Black Cross networks. Examples of ongoing decolonial critique and resistance include the Idle No More movement in North America, the Zapatistas in Mexico, the Mapuche resistance in Chile, among many others. On the incompleteness of the project of modernity, see Latour 1993, 2005, and of modernity/coloniality, see Mignolo 2011—e.g., "the incomplete project of modernity may never be completed, due to the fact that rewesternization is no longer the only game in town" (162).

Yet, recognizing the relative implication of these struggles within modernity/coloniality, I must be attentive in my theoretical re-construction to de-linking these concepts from the modernist concepts to which they have usually been attached—particularly, the dichotomies of social/natural, human/non-human, subject/object, and space/time. Thus, in my reconstruction of the conceptual constellations orbiting around my central concepts, I drop those modernist dichotomies and replace them with alternative concepts that I draw from post-structuralist, post-humanist, and post-colonial theoretical traditions. The alternative language that I use should, not only be sufficient for describing the phenomena that are usually described with modernist language, but also must do so in a way that does not close down the descriptive process by offering a comfortable resting place with apparently uncontroversial explanatory abstractions—e.g., those of the 'individual,' 'self,' 'subject,' 'society,' 'nature,' 'education,' 'development,' 'space,' 'time,' 'the past,' 'the future,' etc. Drawing on Bruno Latour's "actor-network-theory," I find a useful replacement for the 'social/natural' dichotomy with the language of 'movements of association,' which relatively stabilize or destabilize controversies around different descriptions of 'group formations' that are made up of inter/intra-connected, mutually constituting actors, networks, and theories (Latour 2005). These conceptual shifts are especially important for describing the differences and relations between education and study in the undercommons.

Instead of using the language of 'selves,' 'individuals,' and 'subjects' in a way that would take for granted a 'subject'/'object' dichotomy, I can use this new language to describe how group formations of 'selves' are believed to be formed in an uncontroversial way through movements of association that make and stabilize

subscriptions to 'individualizing,' 'subjectivizing' 'plug-ins' (Latour 2005, 207).[114] This destabilizing view on subjectivity then requires a shift away from the normal framing of practices of teaching and learning within the modernist/colonialist concept of the 'education,' i.e., self development, of 'individuals,' and instead allows for conceiving of teaching and learning as happening in processes of 'study' in which various actor-networks interact with, and transform, each other through various mediators and in various places. As explained in Chapter 1, I distinguish different 'regimes of study': the education-based regime is one in which the circulating relations of study, knowledge, and teaching are short-circuited with exams and expertise as means of making individuals ready for governance.

Likewise, instead of the 'space/time' dichotomy, I prefer to use terms that are better suited for describing the "continuous experiences" of human and non-human actors that compose processes (or 'machines') of remembering, desiring, imagining, enjoying, etc (Papdapolous et al 2008). These terms allow better ways for describing space and time as bound up with each other, and for seeing the question of 'what is to come' as a void on which "imaginal machines" are projected in limitlessly controversial ways (Shukaitis 2009b). Nobody has a special ability to project a less controversial trajectory, and they can only be made to seem to do so through the work of suppressing controversies, such as through discourses of the colonial, imperial, and racial differences with their knowledge de-legitimizing effects.

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[114] "Plug-ins" is Latour's neutral term for what could be called individualizers, subjectifiers, personalizers, or interiorizers, i.e., "the *vehicles* that *transport* individuality, subjectivity, personhood, and interiority" (Latour, 2005: 207). This metaphor is from the Internet: "When you reach some site in cyberspace, it often happens that you see nothing on the screen. But then a friendly warning suggests that you 'might not have the right plug-ins' and that you should 'download' a bit of software which, once installed on your system, will allow you to *activate* what you were unable to see before." Against the view of a 'wholesale' human having intentionality, making rational calculations, etc., "to obtain 'complete' human actors, you have to *compose* them out of many successive *layers*, each of which is empirically distinct from the next."

In this chapter, I demonstrate how these theoretical shifts are crucial for describing the complex relations between exodus, abolitionism, decolonization, and composing alternative communal futures. Generally, I describe, through historical and contemporary examples, how practices of exodus and decolonization can, on the one hand, constitute 'imaginal machines' that open up possibilities for radical change (e.g., 'freedom dreams' and 'decolonial de-linking' – Kelley, 2002; Mignolo 2011), and on the other hand, constitute communities, in intimate relationships with territories (with 'commons'), through which new relationships form that can become the basis for alternative, communal modes of association and forms of abolitionist resistance to the dominant, colonialist/modernist institutions. All of these processes include, at their cores, practices of study that are alternative to the education-based regime of study. On modernist/colonialist assumptions, these practices of study tend to be ignored or derogated and, thereby, their value practices tend to be de-legitimated in comparison with modernist value practices (e.g., arguing for inclusion within liberal-statist institutions of education). In order to counter-act the historical neglect of these alternative regimes of study in movements of exodus/decolonization/abolition, I take them—and the ways in which they become recuperated in institutions of education—as focal points of my investigation. To experiment with my theory's usefulness for describing historical and contemporary phenomena in better ways for the advancement of these movements, I highlight hidden histories and imaginal trajectories of "*study in the undercommons"* (Moten and Harney 2013).

Although in an expansion of my project I aim to use this theory to describe many important historical episodes,[115] in this chapter I limit my investigation to a selected narrative around slavery, abolitionism, *marronage*, and continuities of these struggles in contemporary projects. First, I focus on the practice of *marronage* and maroon communities—self-organizing networks of formerly enslaved, fugitive Africans and others— prior to the formal abolition of slavery in the United States. In order to counter-act scholars' relative neglect of the political importance of *marronage* for historical and contemporary movements, my account situates them in relation to, and contrast with, the more established abolitionist movement. Particularly, I describe the ways in which such neglect is symptomatic of colonialist/modernist assumptions amongst scholars, such as in Joel Olson's *The Abolition of White Democracy*, an important movement-embedded intellectual work whose project of 'abolition-democracy' I seek to continue and strengthen through supplementing it with intertwined projects of 'decolonial-democracy' and 'decolonial-abolitionist-study.' Using my conceptual framework from Chapter 2, I describe the struggles of maroon communities as engaging in undercommons relations: struggles to maintain and expand the maroon commons, often overlapping with indigenous commons, and to combat and destroy the white, colonial, capitalist commons. The maroon commons entail imaginal trajectories that could be followed to compose an alternative world—with regimes of study alternative to the education-based one—but for people to subscribe to these trajectories as within the realm of the possible, they need to

[115] Historical examples that I would like to analyze include regimes of study in indigenous resistance to colonialism, resistance to Indian reservations and boarding schools, maintenance of indigenous learning traditions, Black communal self-organization in the Reconstruction period and the post-Reconstruction Jim Crow era, decolonization movements around the world and solidarity with them in the Americas, Black Nationalism with Garveyism, the civil rights movement, the Black Power movement, the Black Campus Movement, and the creation of Black Studies, Women's Studies, and other radical 'Studies' departments and programs in universities.

un-subscribe from the modernist/colonialist assumptions that de-legitimize those trajectories.

To conclude, I examine a contemporary example of decolonial/exodus/abolitionist movements across the Americas, particularly the Zapatistas (EZLN) in Mexico, focusing on the ways in which they incorporate study in the undercommons into their movement. Then, I relate the contemporary and historical narratives through an analysis of two movement-embedded social centers in the US— El Kilombo Intergalactico in Durham, NC and the Mexican Cultural Center in Santa Ana, CA—that have transnational relationships with the Zapatistas and other movements in Latin America while struggling with the conditions of their places under the continuation of the legacy of white supremacist, colonialist, capitalist institutions in the "new Jim Crow" era (Alexander 2010). Through interviews with organizers of these social centers, I investigate the ways in which they make places much like maroon communities but with more intentionally structured programming that enables study—beyond the education-based regime—for strengthening informal networks of cooperation and subverting colonial, state, capitalist control.

Decolonizing the Abolition-democracy

Across the Americas, from the late 15th to the late 19th centuries, hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans escaped from their masters and entered into what was called *marronage*, and many of them formed maroon communities together (Thompson 2006). 'Maroon' was not only a descriptive term for their fugitive situation but also had evaluative connotations, with different valences depending on who used the term. When

used by the escaped former slaves and those who sympathized with them, such as those who were still enslaved, freed Blacks, and abolitionists, it tended to have a positive connotation of having followed a legitimate desire for freedom from an unjust system. When used by the enslavers and most white people, it tended to carry negative evaluative connotations, such as by framing the maroons as following a 'primitive' desire for freedom, possessed by 'wild men' who were 'untamed' and 'savages,' often connected with claims that most maroons were born in Africa rather than in America and thus falling back into their 'African ways' (Thompson 2006, 46). This opposition between evaluative uses of the word 'maroon' is a key manifestation in rhetoric of the historical conflict between projects of modernity/coloniality and of decolonization/ abolitionism/exodus. The framing of *marronage* as 'primitive,' 'untamed,' 'wild,' and 'savage'—with their implied contrast with 'civilized' European, Western, modern modes of world-making—served as a rhetorical tool by agents of the former project for de-legitimizing the forms of study and knowledge that were the basis of self-organized government, security, and food production in the maroon communities. These communities had their own autonomous forms of contribution to the project of decolonization/ abolitionism/exodus, with important connections to the mainstream abolitionist movement, but they were often disconnected, precarious, and short-lived, and made even moreso through their rhetorical and practical suppression by the ideological and repressive apparatuses of the white supremacist plantations and states. The maroon communities served as key parts of movements of abolitionism and decolonization through composing a world radically different from the white supremacist, capitalist, colonial state.

Before elaborating that argument, however, I want to address a possible counter-argument to my approach: the view that *marronage* is not an important historical object for study in relation to contemporary movements because it was marginal to the mainstream U.S. abolitionist movement that resulted in the formal abolition of slavery. In order to redress this continued marginalization of *marronage* and to amplify its 'minor' potentials, I build on the work of the important exceptions of academics who have addressed its importance for political theory (Thompson 2006; Roberts 2007).[116] Further, I situate *marronage* in relation to and contrast with the more recognized abolitionist movement. Particularly, I make a critically constructive analysis of Joel Olson's *The Abolition of White Democracy*: 'constructive' in the sense that I recognize the importance of his movement-embedded project of 'abolitionist-democratic' politics, which "shifts the discourse of political theory from the problem of diversity to the problem of privilege, from strategies of inclusion to strategies for abolition, from a vision of the equal recognition of races to a vision of a world without whiteness, and from the goal of fulfilling liberal democracy to the possibility of transcending it" (Olson 2004, xxiv). While seeking to continue Olson's project, I also critique his occasional falling back on modern/colonial assumptions, and I de-link from them through intertwined projects of 'decolonial-democracy' and 'decolonial-study.'

Olson had good reasons to construct his narrative of abolitionist-democracy in the way that he did, because he draws on the main debates and conflicts in the currents of

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[116] In this Chapter, I draw mostly from Alvin Thompson (2006)'s comprehensive survey of histories of *marronage* across the Americas. Neil Roberts (2007) provides a more rigorous and nuanced political theory of *marronage*, which has strong resonances with my own work, but I do not draw on his work here much because he offers more of a secondary analysis of the primary documents while I find Thompson's work more useful as a basis for making my own analysis. In an extension of this project, I plan to engage more closely with Roberts' work, particularly after the publication of his forthcoming book on '*marronage* as freedom' that develops the ideas from his 2007 dissertation.

abolitionist history. Particularly, he focuses on the attempts to shape the movement amongst those who advocated different approaches to ending slavery, which were generally split between projects for having freed slaves emigrate to another country and projects for abolition within the United States, whether with more gradual means, motivated by moral persuasion, or with more immediatist means, including the threat or use of militant, fanatical resistance (Olson 2004, 133-137). These debates exhibit an interesting dynamic of controversies over the different approaches of exodus, abolition, colonization, modernity, and decolonization as means for ending slavery. My contention is that, since most historical accounts of abolitionism (including those Olson draws upon as well as most others) focus on the mainstream abolitionist movement, with its variations of white-led, black-led, and integrated leadership, and neglect to consider maroon communities as part of abolitionist movement, these accounts remain limited to a range of options for figuring the relations between exodus and abolition in a way that privileges the options that are consistent with coloniality/modernity. Thereby, they marginalize alternatives—such as those partially realized historically with the maroon communities—that are more promising as imaginal bases for composing decolonial futures with modes of organization alternative to those of liberal, statist modernity.

A key example of how the colonialist/modernist options are systemically promoted and decolonial options ignored is seen in the simplifying narratives of major figures from the different strands of abolitionist traditions prior to the Civil War. Most obviously, the white-led American Colonization Society (ACS), which advocated the emigration of freed slaves to Africa, was a strong proponent of colonialist and modernist assumptions, including those undergirding the utopian imaginary of the nation-state of

Liberia that was to be governed by repatriated African people, ideally without racial domination though falling far short in practice.[117] The more subtle modernist/colonial assumption of the ACS was in its use of a developmentalist, covertly racist perspective that "provided political and ideological cover for an expansionist slave South" (Goodman 1998, 16). The ACS was founded in 1816 by white Southern elites who increasingly saw the over one hundred thousand free blacks in the South as a "threat to white security," because of their potential to foment rebellion amongst those who were still enslaved (14-15). The ACS's platform of shipping free blacks to Africa offered a way to ensure harmony across disparate groups—"slaveholders and nonslaveholders, professed abolitionists and anti-abolitionist, North and South"—thereby holding the Union together while justifying the perpetuation of slavery and, further, "removing the onus of slavery from the shoulders of Southerners" (18-19).[118] Undergirding the ACS's audiences' reception of these justifications was their ubiquitous racist belief in the defamation of black character, which was sometimes explicit in the ACS's discourse but was also often hidden by ACS's leaders with their denying blacks to be inherently inferior to whites and instead giving an 'environmentalist' view that attributed black people's degradation to America's lacking the proper conditions for their development and, thus, "the salvation of blacks lay elsewhere," in "their ancestral land" of Africa (20).

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[117] The modernist/colonialist assumptions behind the project of Liberia played out in a way that subverted the utopian dreams of the country to become an egalitarian civilization. According to Robin D.G. Kelley: "In their haste to defend Liberia, most commentators ignored or played down the role of the United States (via the Firestone Rubber Company) as an imperialist presence in the colony and the position of Americo-Liberians as a new, exploitative ruling class. As a result, the indigenous population of Liberia was exploited and oppressed by African Americans, who had ironically returned to their ancestral homeland to escape tyranny." (Kelley 2002, 22).

[118] The ACS's propaganda argued that "gradual emancipation was feasible only if masters were encouraged to free their slaves," that patience was necessary, since emancipation needed to wait "until there was adequate provision for resettlement abroad," and that it was a national, not a regional problem, as "Britain had committed the original sin of enslavement" and "Northern slave traders and merchants shared responsibility with Southern planters for sustaining the institution" (Goodman 1998, 18-19).

Although a small minority of African-Americans was sympathetic to the ACS, by far the majority of African-Americans, especially leaders of the abolitionist movement, were unequivocal in their condemnation of it.[119] Thus, the black-led current of the abolitionist movement sought to oppose the ACS's "defamation of black character," seeing it as "the undergirding argument for slavery and removal," and to counter-pose the influence of this defamation on the construction of white people's prejudice, black writers, such as on the pages of the first black newspaper in the US, *Freedom's Journal*, attempted through moral persuasion to highlight the achievements of black people in the United States, aiming at both black and white audiences (25-6).[120] The black-led abolitionist movement leaders' assault on the colonization approach eventually succeeded in convincing important white abolitionists, particularly William Lloyd Garrison, Simeon Jocelyn, and Arthur Tappan, in 1831, to become opponents of colonization in favor of an immediatist abolitionism (33). When these white opponents joined the efforts of those who struggled for equality within the United States, they not only helped bring the movement more resources, legitimacy, and a wider audience, but also helped dissuade some within the black abolitionist struggle who had advocated alternative forms of colonization, particularly the emigration of free blacks to Canada.

Despite the shift of the weight of the abolitionist movement away from colonization—whether promoting it or arguing against it—and toward planning and

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[119] They condemned the ACS particularly for its functioning "as a defamation society that fed, reinforced, and gave elite respectability to proper prejudice, which easily overlooked or brushed aside the environmentalist explanations of black degradation. And by insisting, as did all colonizationist spokesmen, that white prejudice was irremediable, the society elevated irrational bias against color into a 'natural,' reasonable sentiment" (Goodman 1998, 21).

[120] The newspaper aimed partly at a black audience, to inspire their pride and determination as well as to create links between black communities, "give expression to nationwide black sentiment," and present reports on local conditions for black communities in different cities (Goodman 1998, 26). Intertwined with this goal was their aim of impacting a white audience, forcing them to confront black opinion, defuse their prejudices, and "put white support for colonization on the defensive."

enacting immediatist approaches, the movement still retained many modernist assumptions, necessarily linked with subtle forms of coloniality. In part of the movement's defense against the colonization approach, they had sought to undermine the latter's defamation of black people's moral character and intellectual capabilities, whether directly or implied in 'environmentalist' arguments. The complexity of the relations between different sides in the movement required the more radical, immediatist advocates to make multiple compromises. In what Ibram Rogers calls "the first great debate over the function of black higher education," he distinguishes four main camps in the debate who argued over the "slave-holding society's racial quandary: what to do with free blacks" (Rogers 2012, 10-11). On the side of colonization education, some black educators were "*accommodating separatists*," believing "that African Americans should impart their 'superior' civilization to 'backward' Africans," and they joined forces with the white "*paternal conservatives,*" particularly the ACS who were "among the minority of whites who believed at the time that African Americans should be educated" (10). Opposed to them in this ideological dispute were two camps who joined forces to advocate for giving freed blacks a 'classical' college education in the US: black thinkers who were "*egalitarian elitists*," believing that "both races were capable of receiving the same education for the same purpose—training a talented few to lead and provide a model for the many," and white abolitionists who were "*paternal liberals*, who believed they were innately endowed with a civil or Christian mission to lift African Americans from their degradation by means of a liberal method—education for domestic civil equality" (11). Despite their racial and ideological differences, a commonality across

these four camps was a shared faith in the modernist institution of education—and, conversely, a neglect to consider narratives of alternative regimes of study.

Perhaps because the black 'egalitarian elitists' were seeking to collaborate with the 'paternal liberals' and to connect with a wider white audience who subscribed to the modernist valuing of education—and probably also because they believed in these ideals to varying extents—they deployed them in the rhetoric they used to counter the colonization discourse and to inspire black people to organize themselves with pride and self-determination. These assumptions were seen most especially in the call to self-improvement through work and education, such as in the *Freedom Journal* in 1827: "the key to the race's advance was rigorous education and hard work, embracing the virtues of industry, temperance, and order, thereby convincing 'the world by uniform propriety of conduct … that we are worthy of esteem and patronage'" (Goodman 1998, 26). Likewise, the militant abolitionist, David Walker, argued that, black people should aim to become educated, in order to counter white people's (such as Thomas Jefferson's) assumptions of black people's inherent intellectual inferiority, and "nothing so frightened whites as 'the bare name of educating the colored people'" (Walker 1829-30; in Goodman 1998, 31). With the integration of the immediatist wing of the movement, the white leaders also promoted education as a means both for combating white prejudice and developing movement leaders, such as with their plan for establishing manual labor colleges, with a first one located in New Haven, which would "train a new generation of black leaders (33). Their hopes were realized to some extent, as some of the key black abolitionists were educated in Northern schools, usually segregated, such as the African Free Schools in New York City, from which several notable black abolitionists graduated, including

Henry Highland Garnet, James McCune Smith, and Charles L. Reason (Kharem and Hayes 2005, 74).

Although the intellectual development of black abolitionist leaders was certainly important for the realization of some of the abolitionist movements' goals, it is my contention that retaining an uncritical view on these modernist assumptions prevents us from seeing the ways in which the abolitionist project was *limited* in carrying out its mission by subscriptions to these assumptions and the practices and institutions that they legitimated. On the one hand, I argue that the ability of black abolitionist leaders to develop their capacities in education institutions was because of their practices of *autonomous study* within those places, not because of but *despite* of the presence of modernist/colonial practices in those institutions. For example, to the extent that the African Free Schools employed black teachers who promoted the learning of African and African-American knowledge they attracted more black students, while conversely their enrollment declined when they hired white teachers who promoted modernist/colonialist curricula, such as James Andrews, "who began to favor the idea of Blacks returning to Africa as colonizers" (Kharem and Hayes 2005, 74). On the other hand, the major successes realized through the abolition movement required the more radical abolitionists to compromise as they entered partnerships, not only with the 'paternal liberals,' but also with the Northern white elite, the Northern states, and the Republican Party, culminating with the Union victory in the Civil War and the formal outlawing of slavery and involuntary servitude with the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1865. Yet, the intended effects of this formal abolition were only partially realized in the South in the Reconstruction period after the Civil War, as black people still lacked effective political,

economic, and civic freedoms to a great extent, and even less so after the end of Reconstruction and the beginning of the Jim Crow era (Olson 2004, 9-16; Du Bois 1992).

Considering the manifold ways in which these forms of racial domination continue today in "the new Jim Crow" and "white democracy" (Alexander 2010; Olson 2004), this should call for more serious investigation into the conditions that limited the abolitionist movement from realizing its full potential and made it more of a means of recuperating the movement into the project of modernity/coloniality and, thereby, *delaying* meaningful abolition of white supremacist institutions. One of the key mechanisms of this recuperation was the institution of education. Although there were inklings of black self-determinated study in the early abolitionist movement, such as in the African Free Schools—later developed in more self-determining ways with the Black Nationalist and Black Power movements of the 20th century (Kharem and Hayes 2004)—most instances of black study within education institutions subordinated black, African people's knowledge to white, Western, Christian epistemology and recuperated their passions for learning into the modernist/colonialist projects of liberal, capitalist democracy.

Toward Decolonizing the Abolition-Democracy

In order to elucidate the problems with continuing these modernist/colonialist assumptions in contemporary efforts to articulate and carry out the abolitionist project, I give a critically constructive analysis of Joel Olson's *Abolition of White Democracy*. Seeking to expand on his nuanced genealogical critique of white democracy and white citizenship and, thereby, to strengthen his project of abolition-democracy, I interrogate three main shortcomings of his theorization of it: maintaining modernist assumptions,

promoting the modernist institution of education, and neglecting the inherently colonial logic of modernity.

The first problem that I seek to redress is Olson's maintaining the central modernist assumptions of the 'society'/'nature' split and a view of 'society' as composed of 'individuals.' In his critique of a white supremacy, "a *society* that has been historically marked by racial discrimination," he maintains some of the central institutions of this 'society' (xx – *emphasis added*):

> "The political challenge, then, is to subvert the privileges of the white citizen and transform his or her democratic imagination. In practical terms this means eradicating any disparity between whites and people of color in the realms of education, law enforcement, employment, housing, health care, and politics." (xxii)

Further, his argument about white privilege presupposes a society made of individuals who possess these privileges and who can make choices to aim to abolish the structures that create their privileges: "white citizenship must be posed as a choice (even if it is not just a choice) in order to suggest political alternatives" (xxix). He is not wrong to emphasize the potential agency of white people in combating racial domination, but in putting such emphasis on people's choices of whether or not to abandon 'white privilege,' he diverts attention from an important question for the project of abolition-democracy: why have by far the majority of whites throughout American history acted *as if they did not have a choice* in maintaining their privileged standing? Pursuing this inquiry in a historical materialist way could lead to deeper controversies, with questions such as: what processes, discourses, and institutions (e.g., the education system, the hetero-patriarchal family, etc.) constructed the imaginary and knowledge through which people saw the world in such ways that they did not feel compelled to recognize and take responsibility for undoing the structures of their white privilege?

This line of questioning leads to the second key shortcoming that I find with Olson's theory of the abolition-democracy: that he neglects to theorize the importance of processes of *constituting knowledge* in the construction of the white, liberal democracy—not only explicit constructions of knowledge but also the converse voids of what they suppress, i.e., as "epistemologies of ignorance"—as well as in the possibilities for opening alternatives with abolition-democracy.[121] Olson does give some arguments that imply this importance. For example, he notes the importance of study in the abolitionist movement: the Garrisonian abolitionists "sought to build a constituency … by awakening consciences, encouraging free speech and debate, publishing propaganda, and refusing to sacrifice principle for political expediency" (Olson 2004, 136). Also, abolitionist politics expansion of democracy is "not just a matter of changing democratic procedures or norms but also of creating new institutions: integrated antislavery meetings; state legislatures supplemented by mass meetings of Black women, men, and children during Reconstruction; freedom schools in the back of beauty parlors during the civil rights movement; Black Panther parties for self-defense" (140). Although he does not explicitly make a point about the importance of abolitionist-study—which takes place not only in the freedom schools but also in all of these new institutions—he at least gives these examples that imply it. Yet, Olson takes too uncritical of a view of some of the normal institutions that compose the white democracy, particularly the education-based regime of study and its roles in suppressing and/or recuperating autonomous black study and in creating white citizenship. For example, he promotes social programs that supply "a good education" (128) and argues that "an abolitionist-democratic strategy" should promote

[121] I draw the concept of "epistemologies of ignorance" from philosopher Charles W. Mills, but in an extension of this project I need to engage more with his work and related debates (e.g., Mills 1997; Sullivan and Tuana 2007).

"policies such as busing and affirmative action," which "are important not so much because they foster diversity but because they redistribute racially skewed education resources, countering whites' material interest in segregated schools and preferential access to elite universities …" and "challenges parent-teacher associations when they seek to preserve racial segregation or tracking in schools" (141). Of course Olson is in line with the abolitionist project with his critiques of the white supremacist features of the education system, but he makes these in a way that seems to presume the underlying value of education as an institution, thereby neglecting its constitutive role in producing white supremacist, capitalist, *and colonial* knowledge and subjectivities, both historically and ongoing.

Olson's lack of attention to the colonial aspect of this knowledge is part of the third limitation that I see with his project, his neglecting sufficiently to highlight and criticize the ways in which coloniality is tied up with white citizenship and white democracy. Although he notes that, in addition to indentured servitude, white colonists' "hatred of Indians" was one of the "foundation[s] of the American system of race," he then closes down the possibility of exploring inquiry into the intertwining of coloniality and racism by distinguishing the English view of "Indians as savages but potentially assimilable into English civilization" as "an ethnocentric vision, certainly, but not a racist one" (Olson 2004, 34). By contrast, theorists of the "coloniality of power," particularly Walter Mignolo and Anibal Quijano, argue that, despite the word 'race' not existing in the 16th and 17th centuries, "the underlying principle was racial," as "'purity of blood' was "used to establish the distinction between Christians, Moors, and Jews," such that, in the modern/colonial world, the principle "for classification of people in epistemic

hierarchies is racial in the sense that it is based on physical features whether blood or skin, linked to either religious or national communities" (Mignolo 2001, 435). Olson's distinction between "ethnocentric" and "racist" seems to foreclose exploring the question of what roles the "colonial differences" of 'savage' and 'civilized,' 'heathen' and 'Christian,' etc (Mignolo 2011), in the colonists' discourse played in the Virginia assembly's later creation, from 1670 to 1705, of "laws distinguishing Africans and Indians from the English" (Olson 2004, 36).

What sorts of institutions, practices, and discourses produced the subjectivities and knowledges that framed the white elite colonists' views of the world when they wrote those racist laws? For Olson to support one of his book's main arguments, that "the cross-class alliance between the capitalist class and a section of the working class" was "the class foundation of the white democracy" (Olson 2004, 16), in his critical genealogy of this white democracy he puts great emphasis on the creation of 'race'—particularly with racialized slavery and racialized citizenship as standing—as key in preventing the unity of the working class and their potential for concerted rebellion (36, 43). The emphasis he puts on these dynamics of class and race is far greater than that which he gives to the relations between coloniality and either class or race.

His analysis of the class and race dynamics constructing white democracy are very important and useful for guiding contemporary movements of abolition-democracy, but they could be made even more useful by complementing them with an analysis of how coloniality plays into, and undergirds, these dynamics—elaborating on Olson's gesture toward how "hatred of Indians" is a "foundation of the American system of race" (34). Connecting this movement of constructive revision with my first two critical points,

understanding the historical intersections of coloniality with race and class requires dropping the modernist assumptions that obscure them, especially the modernist concepts that constitute the discourse around the education-based regime of study. Contrary to Olson's claim that the "English gave up any plans to 'civilize' the first peoples" after "an attack on Jamestown in 1622 by a confederation of Indian tribes reacting to English expansion in the region" (34), attempts at 'civilizing' the Indians with schools and colleges actually continued throughout the 17th century—and into the 20th century with 'boarding schools' (Szasz 2007; Smith 2005).[122] Through examining these education projects—of opposing and de-legitimizing the Indians own projects of autonomous study and of forming the white colonists' ways of seeing the world through Western knowledge in contrast to that of the 'savage,' non-Christian Indians and Africans—it becomes more difficult to say as Olson does that "racial domination … was a deliberate policy of the Virginia ruling elite" (Olson 2004, 37). To do so seems to imply that the responsibility for our ongoing legacy of racism should be laid upon them as individuals and, thereby, to mute potential questions about the processes and institutions through which their subjectivities and epistemologies were constructed.[123]

My argument is not that Olson is wrong to implicate such people in responsibility for constructing the white democracy, but rather that the way he sometimes falls back on these individualizing frames tends to short-circuit further inquiry into the institutions and practices—continuing today—that form those people in ways that make them see

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[122] For examples of colonial education projects in Virginia – of both colonists and Indians, see Szasz 2007.
[123] Olson makes arguments that imply some individualizing of responsibility for the system of racial domination at several points throughout his book. For example, he argues: "historically white citizens have made the wrong choice about their democratic alternatives"; "White workers, Du Bois emphasizes, repress the Black community because they see it in their (short-term) interests to do so"; "In allying themselves with the large planters, poor whites traded class solidarity for whiteness and its accompanying privileges" (Olson 2004, xxix, 14, 39).

themselves and others as 'individuals' and that make them subscribe to certain classed, racialized, and gendered imaginaries and dispositions. The particular foreclosed line of inquiry that I am opening here is around the ways that the education-based regime of study de-legitimates non-white, non-Western knowledges while legitimating white, Western knowledges—and to examine the ways in which these education-mediated constructions of the "epistemic colonial difference" are intertwined with constructions of the "ontological colonial differences" and other identity-based differences (Mignolo 2011, 88). It is my contention that the latter questions are extremely important for contemporary abolitionist/decolonial movements to explore because some of those very institutions, particularly those of education, continue today, and they continue to constitute subjectivities with colonialist, racist, classist, hetero-patriarchal features. Such controversies are the focus of my inquiry in the rest of this chapter.

Marronage as Study in the Undercommons of Decolonial-Abolition-Democracy

Returning to the debate from the early 19th century on the question of 'what is to be done with freed blacks,' across the differences of all the participants in this debate—the egalitarian elitists, accommodating separatists, and the white, paternal liberals and conservatives—they shared a commonality of promulgating narratives that reduced the possibilities for regimes of study to the education-based one. Conversely, they neglected to consider alternative regimes of study—despite the fact that the 'free blacks' who were the objects of their debate were themselves already enacting such regimes, such as in escaped slaves' maroon communities. To break out of the current continuation of such debates that limit themselves to such education-focused simplifying narratives, we need

to take a decolonial perspective on the epistemologies that are promoted or suppressed through education institutions. Thus, as a way to redress the problems with the retention of modernist/colonialist assumptions in Olson's abolition-democracy, I complement it with an approach of decoloniality, and what Mignolo calls "decolonizing democracy," inspired by the autonomous indigenous self-governance in the Zapatista territories of Chiapas (Mignolo 2011, 228). Further, as a complement to Olson's approach that redresses his lack of attention to the political constitution of knowledge, I advocate for both abolition-study and decolonial-study, that is, critical investigation of the ways that white supremacy and coloniality intertwine in the education-based regime of study and promotion of abolitionist/decolonial movement-embedded study. This view can allow for seeing how abolitionist-study and decolonial-study can take place both within and outside education institutions, while simultaneously confronting the white supremacist, colonial configuration of study that is hegemonic within them.

An examination of the often neglected history of maroon communities offers an alternative regime of study: a model of intersecting abolition, decolonial, and exodus types of study. Although Olson offers a narrative of abolitionist-democracy that varies from liberal democracy to certain extents, by focusing on the history of formal abolitionism, thus overshadowing *marronage*, he limits the possible extent of his critique of the assumptions of liberal democracy and, thereby, reproduces some of the aspects of that form of democracy—particularly some of its modernist assumptions—in his own alternative form of democracy, the abolition-democracy. Thus, as a way to extend his critique of liberal democracy in more radical directions, I examine the hidden history of *marronage* with an eye toward theorizing its alternative, abolitionist, decolonial forms of

democracy, and especially highlighting the ways in which these involve forms of study. The practices of maroon communities present the basis for articulating radically different conceptions of democracy, equality, and freedom, ones that are not linked with states, capitalism, racial divisions, or the categories of modernity (e.g., the nature/society, time/space, and primitive/modern dichotomies). Thus, I characterize maroons as a "decolonial option" presenting alternative "communal futures" (Mignolo 2011). To understand these maroon communities and *marronage* without falling back on modernist assumptions, in the following I theorize their contributions to abolitionist, decolonial, exodus projects using the concepts of the common, commons, and undercommons, which are elaborated in Chapter 2. The latter concepts provide a way to highlight the importance of regimes of study in *marronage* that are alternative to that of the education-based regime, and that are central for fugitive slaves to navigate the undercommons relations—'within and against' and 'with and for'—between their maroon commons and the white, colonial, capitalist commons. This narrative approach provides an antidote to the normal use of modernist assumptions, such as in the ideal of 'public education,' that de-legitimizes and suppresses such alternatives.

From the beginning of the modernist regime of slavery in the Americas in the late 15th century to its formal abolition in the 18th and 19th centuries at various times in different places, hundreds of thousands of formerly enslaved people participated in *marronage* through their escapes from slavery, their fugitive flights to freedom, and their creations of maroon communities. A precise count of the settled communities is extremely difficult to establish, given their constituent task of avoiding detection and capture, but Thompson estimates that they numbered in the thousands across the

Americas (Thompson 2006, 101). While 'maroon' was the standard term used in English, in different languages and countries, different words have been used to describe maroons, including *cimmaroon* (the original linguistic form of the concept - Spanish in the Caribbean and Mexico), *palenqúe* (Cuba), and *quilombo* and *mocambo* (Brazil) (113). *Marronage* could be done individually—often living as a solitary wanderer—or collectively, with the latter forming communities ranging in size from a couple people to larger settlements of a few hundred people (53, 59). The largest community in the Americas was the republic-like Palmares in Brazil with around 15,000-20,000 people living in a semi-autonomous federation of smaller settlements. The largest in the territory that is now known as the United States were in the Great Dismal Swamp area between North Carolina and Virginia (about 2,000 people)[124] and in former Spanish Florida in which several hundred escaped slaves lived with Native Americans and white military deserters until suffering military defeat in the Second Seminole War against the US military (121-7). The latter are examples of more well-established, highly organized settlements, while most maroon communities were more temporary and precarious (67). The territorial location of most maroon communities were in a rural setting, while some were urban—which had less challenges of terrain but also less freedom and more exploitation, usually living individually and blending in with free blacks—and some took maritime forms, occasionally through collaboration with pirates (103, 108, 113).

[124] The maroon communities of the Great Dismal Swamp were the subject of Harriett Beecher Stowe's second novel, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp* (1856). By deliberate contrast with the passive martyrdom of the subject of Stowe's first novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the main character in this novel, Dred, is an escaped slave who takes on a more revolutionary character by preaching violent retribution for the evils of slavery. An interesting comparative analysis could be done on the role of education in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in contrast with an alternative regime of study in the maroon communities of *Dred*.

Focusing on the rural type of maroon communities in the United States, a general overview of the other forms of human association with which they interacted include: the white-dominated plantations, the State (including the colonial Southern and Northern state governments and the Federal government, and the various governments of other states who were involved in the US territory as colonists, military opponents, and trade partners), the agents of the state who made and carried out the white supremacist laws, and businesses, corporations, and other actors in the capitalist economy and property regime, especially those involved in the slave trade ('middle passage'). Other key relations to consider were those of the maroons with communities of enslaved Africans who worked on the plantations, indigenous communities, poor white communities, and the networks of fugitive flight to the Northern States, especially through the Underground Railroad with the help of the abolitionist movement and free black communities.

Similar to any kind of community, maroon communities had their own commons, which they self-governed through developing and maintaining value practices for regulating their access and use. Understanding the relations between the commons of these different communities—with/against each other and with/against private property and state regimes—is crucial for a critical analysis of the limiting and enabling conditions for the conflicting, incomplete projects of modernity/coloniality and of abolition/decolonization/exodus.[125] On the one hand, maroon communities have often articulated their commons in symbiotic relation with the value practices of African traditional commons that enslaved African people brought with them across the 'middle passage'—often through coalescing across various African cultures and sharing African

[125] I use forward slashes ('/') between the terms of "abolition/decolonization/exodus" and "modernity/coloniality" to indicate my affirmation of the openness of controversies about how these projects are, and should be, articulated together. Using hyphens ('-') could serve the same purpose.

traditional knowledges, such as of agriculture, food preparation, housing, and defense (Thompson 2006, 79). Likewise, they often made harmonious connections with indigenous communities and their commons, whether joining communities or cooperating across communities in defense and resistance against their common enemy of the colonialist enslavers (96-99). The maroon commons were often connected with the commons of poor white communities, and some, though relatively few, white people even joined maroon communities, including fugitives, outlaws, "military deserters and indentured servants … buccaneers, corsairs, freebooters and pirates," anti-slavers, and "poor whites who were not slaveholders" (81-82). The maroon commons were most tightly intertwined with the commons of slave communities on plantations and the commons of other maroons, through networks of trade, mutual aid, solidarity, communication, family, and especially fugitive flight, including connections with the *marronage* network of the Underground Railroad and free black communities. Sometimes the maroon communities found that their commons were in oppositional relation to the commons of other communities, such as when they made their settlements on indigenous lands without establishing friendly communicative relationships (245). Their commons more often came into conflict with the commons of poor white communities and the white plantations, and especially with the latter's property and with their protectors of the white supremacist state, sometimes in collaboration with indigenous people, poor whites, and enslaved Africans who were paid and/or coerced to become informants or 'maroon hunters' (96).

Through engaging in these mutually supportive and oppositional relations, the maroon communities and their commons served as key parts of movements of

abolitionism/decolonization/exodus, in that they were composing a world radically different from the world shaped through the projects of the white supremacist, capitalist, modernist, colonial state. As a way to theorize in a more nuanced way these struggles to maintain and expand the maroon and indigenous commons and to combat and destroy the white, colonial, capitalist commons, I envision them as relations of *undercommons*. Further, to understand how these relations of *undercommons* involve processes of the constitution of knowledge, affect, imaginaries, and subjectivities that are useful and necessary for movements of exodus/decoloniality/abolitionism, I highlight the practices of *study* that constitute them. Particularly, the main reason that I note these elements of study is that doing so can serve as a counter-active measure to the usual manner in which modernist/colonialist assumptions—co-constituted with the education-based regime of study—suppress the importance and legitimacy of *marronage*. The maroon commons entail imaginal trajectories that could be followed to compose an alternative world, but for people to subscribe to these trajectories as within the realm of the possible, they need to un-subscribe from certain frames for seeing the world that de-legitimize and efface those trajectories. Hundreds of thousands of enslaved Africans on plantations, as well as some indigenous people and poor whites, were able to subscribe to these imaginal trajectories and participate in *marronage* because they had participated in practices of study that stoked the flames of their passions for freedom, against the forces of institutions, such as those of modernist/colonialist education, that would make them subscribe to counter-vailing frames that would de-legitimize those trajectories. In the following, I examine maroon study through the undercommons in relation to value practices of maroon commons, particularly around fugitive escape, building and

defending community, and resistance. In each of these, I describe ways in which such alternative regimes of study continually transgress the boundaries that modernist/colonialist assumptions set up—between 'social' and 'natural,' 'individual' and 'state,' 'space' and 'time'—to legitimize the world they compose and to de-legitimize alternatives. The maroon regimes of study circulated knowledge, teaching, and study continually for its participants to develop capacities of evasion from, and resistance to, governance within the status quo.

Practices of study were a core element of how former slaves were able to follow their "deep passion for freedom," escape from the plantations, and enter into a fugitive life (Thompson 2006, 41). Although desires to flee enslavement may have some innate basis genetically coded into the human body, the encouragement and fostering of these desires required imagining the possibility for escape, "freedom dreams" (Kelley 2002, 17). These imaginal machines for flight were constituted through informal, and covertly formal, practices of study amongst the enslaved peoples on the plantations, such as through practices of story-telling: relating stories of successful escapes of former slaves to maroon communities in the nearby swamps or mountains, or of the role of maroons in the Haitian revolution, or even sharing their own dreams of personal liberation. Their composition of these imaginal trajectories may also have included narrating stories of contrast between their own conditions of domination and those of enslaved Africans on other plantations as well as of freed Blacks in the North and South and of maroon communities—and learning through these stories that the Maroons "enjoyed a much greater measure of freedom than any other African communities in the Americas during the slavery period, and what was most irksome to the White overlords was that this

freedom had been taken by the Blacks rather than given by the Whites" (Thompson 2006, 52).

In addition to the work such collective study could do for developing their capacities for imagining escape, further practices of study were necessary for turning these desires into plans—backed with information, skills, resources, and networks of support—for the actions of leaving and, most importantly, eluding detection and connecting with other Maroons to form a mutually supportive community. One of the most famous stories of *marronage* was that of the abolitionist leader, Frederick Douglass's flight to freedom, in preparation for which he spent years learning to read and write, partly because he loved learning but also instrumentally "so he could write his own passes in the name of his employer or overlord" (62). Much informal study was required for gaining the skills, knowledge, and dispositions for successfully embarking on the various methods of escape and evasion. Making careful, well-informed decisions about the timing, place, tools, and paths of desertion was crucial.[126] For both eluding detection in the practices of escape and in the establishment of maroon communities, a crucial enabling condition was practices of study for gathering and relaying information of happenings at plantations and with the authoritarian state. Some of the Maroons' "friends, relatives, and well-wishers" stayed behind to act as informants for those who escaped, so as to counter the enslavers' and states' surveillance, policing of, and military expeditions

[126] "Deserters usually left quietly during the night or in the early hours of the morning; on long weekends or during festivals, when they were allowed much greater mobility to visit friends and relatives on other plantations; when they had been sent on errands or during expeditions that they joined to apprehend Maroons. They went on foot, on horseback, by boat; along roads, and through swamplands and thorn bushes." (Thompson 2006, 95)

against the Maroon communities and their practices of escape, expropriation, and resistance (139).

Thus, the Maroons who escaped were vitally interconnected with the enslaved Africans who remained on plantations but had the spirit of *marronage* affectively flowing through their hearts and minds, constituting informal networks of cooperation between them. Yet, to understand fully how these networks functioned, one needs to drop modernist/colonialist assumptions, which suppress the possibility of describing the *marronage* option in a communicable way, as can be seen in how the slave masters, the colonial state, and the majority of white people used derogatory, stigmatizing rhetoric to label the Maroons. To have this de-legitimating and obscuring effect, their rhetoric deploys "colonial differences" (Mignolo 2011), especially the differences that are variations of the 'society'/'nature' dichotomy. One important set of possibilities that this dichotomy obscures in the practices of the Maroons is their capacities, gained through very intensive and careful study, to perform actions of fugitive escape, evasion, and counter-counter-insurgent surveillance and communication that transcend any assumed 'natural'/'social' split. For example, in preparation for the path of flight, Maroons needed to learn how to navigate the treacherous terrain of forests, underbrush, swamps, and mountains in which their movements of association with the rocks, water, dirt, plants, and animals could aid them in keeping their bodies hidden from detection and capture.[127] The collaborative association across the modernist human/non-human divide was also seen in how the land's diverse ecologies presented dangerous obstacles to military and police

[127] For example, in the Leeward Maroons of Jamaica "frenzied vegetation spanned countless crevasses," and Brazil's topographical features "best facilitated *marronage*" due to its "huge mountains, long and winding rivers and streams, numerous swamps, dense forests, and prickly bushes [that] made pursuit a formidable task" (Thompson 2006, 180-181).

expeditions set out against the maroons, such as "microparasites, insects, predatory animals, thorns and briars, and diseases" (Thompson 2006, 186).[128]

Such techniques of surreptitious camouflage, movement, evasion, and communication had to be learned through study. Yet, the ingenuity, intelligence, and knowledge behind these capabilities would be neglected and obscured if viewed through the frames of the narratives deployed by the enslavers and the colonial state to de-legitimize and stigmatize *marronage,* both in its actuality and in its imaginative potentialities. In their rhetoric, those enslaved Africans who become Maroons were considered to have left 'society' and 'civilization' because they were 'wild,' 'uncouth,' 'untamed' individuals, following a 'primitive' desire for freedom—which were some of the descriptions associated with the terms 'cimmaron' and 'Maroon' in Spanish and English dictionaries, respectively (46, 48). Those who ran away were often scapegoated by the press as being "credulous, lazy, superstitious, given to thievery, criminality, and sickly" and even diagnosed as suffering from "a disease – a mono-mania" (50). Another negative rhetorical association with Maroons was to refer to them as a kind of fecal matter, i.e., *waste*, in relation to civilization: as "the enemy in our bowels" or "intestine enemies" (102).[129] By drawing a clear line between what is civilized/social/tame and what is uncivilized/natural/wild and by associating positive value with the former and negative or zero value with the latter, these colonial differences serve to foreclose the

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[128] Another Maroon tactic for eluding capture was to learn to camouflage themselves "by using the surrounding flora as part of their dress" and they "imitated the sounds of birds and animals when communicating with each other" (Thompson 2006, 198).

[129] This rhetorical association of Maroons with waste and feces is very relevant for the argument that I will make in the next Chapter about the continuity between the discourses of 'Maroons' and 'dropouts.' The inverse side of colonial development has often been described in colonial discourses as 'waste,' such as in John Locke's liberal political theory (Gidwani 2008; Goldstein 2013). This rhetorical dichotomy reappears in more contemporary discourses around education in which school 'dropouts' are framed as the 'waste product' of the education system (e.g., with the United Negro College Fund's anti-dropout slogan of "a mind is a terrible thing to waste").

possibility of considering the ways in which the practices of the Maroons for navigating their environment—across the assumed boundaries of 'social'/'natural'—entail study for creating knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they, and others, might positively value.

Then, the question must be raised of how Maroons' own practices of valuing and wasting can have a basis of communication and a sustainable collectivity. Maroon communities' value practices are situated in stark opposition to the modernist/colonialist assumptions of value-making as happening only through the mediation of 'individuals' collected in a 'society' that alienates some of its powers of decision-making over norms to the state through law-making and enforcement, while keeping some its power to decide upon norms over the individuals' possessions of private property. By contrast, maroon communities tended to have much messier practices of value making and enforcing, descriptions of which burst the simplifying boundaries of the dichotomies of state/society, public/private, and society/nature. Maroons governed themselves, each other, and the tools, plants, animals, and terrain in and around the places in which they co-habitated, through practices of the maroon commons, developing norms for their harmonious interaction with each other and for their access, regulation, and use of their resources. Since the Maroon communities were composed of people who often came from diverse ethnic and linguistic traditions but were formed, not for the purpose of producing an ethnically and culturally homogenous group, but rather for defending themselves from and resisting their common enemy of the regime of colonial and racial domination, "[i]t was crucial to develop communal norms and means of communication that would allow various languages, cultures, and customs to fuse into one collective culture that would function as a bearer of an independent Maroon identity" (Zips 1999,

63-64; quoted in Thompson 2006, 84). Simultaneously, they needed to avoid the creation of rigidly fixed identities of the Maroon community that could lead to inter-Maroon tensions that the State could exploit, such as by hiring members of one Maroon community to hunt those of another. Various practices of collective study are involved in this cross-cultural, cross-linguistic communication—in and through 'the common'—for coming to know and trust each other enough to collaborate on projects together. To add further complexity to these practices of study, they must navigate their communal norms for governing their commons as relations of *under*commons, in the sense that they not only must (re)produce their own norms for their commons but also negotiate the potentially conflictual, co-existent, or symbiotic relations of their commons with/against the state, property regimes, and other communities/commons.

For constituting the relations of community that are the basis for communication about norms of the commons, the participants in *marronage* developed positive affective relationships—of family, love, solidarity, friendship, spirituality, and decoloniality—within the maroon community as well as between it and slave communities on the plantations, other maroon communities, and indigenous and poor white communities. The "deep passion for freedom" felt by enslaved persons was not the individualistic kind of liberty praised in liberal political theory but rather one that bled into solidarity, seeing one's own liberation as tied up with the liberation of one's family, friends, and fellow laborers under slavery (Thompson 2006, 41).[130] The pull of the affective ties of love, kinship, parenthood, and longing were seen in how members of maroon communities often returned to their former places of enslavement in order to help loved ones attempt

[130] For a rigorous political theory of "*marronage* as freedom," see Neil Roberts's dissertation (Roberts 2007) and his forthcoming book on the subject.

to flee (58).[131] Considering the gender makeup of *marronage*, many women fled and joined maroon communities and some were important Maroon leaders, but the majority of Maroons were men, not due to any greater desire for freedom but due to the special circumstances of their lives compared with women's circumstances: having to take care of children, less mobility in their work, facing greater suspicion if seen alone, risking sexual assault, and difficulties of navigating the terrain (69-76).

A key practice that cohered members of Maroon communities was spirituality, with its common rituals, celebrations, and customs that provided a basis for giving meaning to the regularities and events of study, life, and work in the communities, as "not only an elaboration of their worldview but part of their political strategy to secure and maintain their freedom" via religions' "powerful and positive psychological effects" (231). The intersection with traditional African communities and commons was seen in how some of these spiritual practices were drawn from them, as "music, song and dance on social occasions, such as special days or events in honor of a deity, the planting or reaping of crops and the celebration of the new year, were common in Africa and were replicated in the Americas" (192). The Maroons drew on African spiritual traditions as well as Christian traditions and sometimes fused these in Afro-Christian syncretic religions (234). In drawing on the Christian traditions, they tended to use those elements that supported values of communal freedom as well as for supporting resistance, such as seen in Nat Turner's rebellion in which he drew on Christian myths to justify the killing of white enslavers (235). The colonial, authoritarian state recognized how dangerous it

[131] Bonds of kinship and love motivated Maroons to bring their children with them on their flight, or to come back to abduct them, as *marronage* "provided parents with the opportunity not only of raising children in a slave-free environment but of producing children who had never been branded as someone else's property" (Thompson 2006, 95).

was to their and the slaveholders' interests for the Maroons to re-appropriate religious traditions for their own purposes, so they "often sought to subvert Maroon communities from within by sending clergymen to reside among them to teach them the 'official' version of Christianity" (236). To counter-act such incursions on the spiritual autonomy of their commons, the Maroon communities not only fought away such priests but also sometimes incorporated a critique of interlopers into their religious doctrines by associating whiteness with devils (238).

As the maroon communities existed in varying levels of intensity and constancy of guerilla warfare, practices of security were paramount for their longevity. Beyond the basis of security in developing strong communal and spiritual ties within the human group of Maroons, practices of security also had to be constructed in their movements of association with the non-human environment and with humans of other communities. The principal forms of ecological security in maroon communities took the forms of their relationships with water and food. Practices of informal study—in association with African, indigenous, and slave communities' commons—were crucial to their developing knowledge and skills for procuring fresh, clean, accessible, reliable water (such as digging wells and troughs), for practicing safe, disease-avoiding wastewater removal, and for planting, growing, preparing, and storing wholesome nutritious food (184, 243-251).[132]

[132] In addition to learning from experiences of trial and error in exploring and attempting agriculture and foraging in their new environment, Maroons drew on knowledge of food and water from the commons of African traditions, especially in more tropical climates, as African-born Maroons brought "extensive knowledge of tropical soil conditions" (Thompson 2006, 243). Likewise, they learned from the knowledge commons of indigenous communities, particularly on "the cultivation of indigenous crops, such as maize and cassava, and also with respect to knowledge of local soil types" and for methods of food preparation (244, 252). They also drew techniques for growing the crops of the plantations from the knowledge commons of the slave communities.

The maroon communities' agriculture sharply contrasted with the white supremacist plantation approach to agriculture of mono-cropping—their "seeing like a state" in calculative attempts to control 'nature' and the human beings who worked on their measured, bounded territory (Scott 1998). Partly because of Maroons' desires to avoid detection and capture, i.e., their studying and practicing "the art of not being governed"—and partly because of their drawing on indigenous and African knowledges of food production, the Maroons eschewed any kind of mono-cropping on large, controlled fields in favor of what James Scott calls "escape agriculture": more mobile, flexible, camouflaged forms of agriculture, which included foraging, hunting, inter-cropping, diverse cropping, and swidden agriculture (Scott 2009; Thompson 2006, 244, 251). [133] Importantly, the informal practices of study that produced the ingenuity and intelligence exhibited through these agricultural techniques would tend to be effaced, obscured, and de-legitimized through dominant, state-centric, expert-driven discourses around agriculture, both then and now. The colonial difference of an assumed 'natural'/'social' split serves to relegate the Maroons' agricultural practices into the de-valued 'nature' side, framed as being too close to an 'unproductive,' 'primitive,' 'wild' past—and on 'wasted,' 'unimproved' land—as opposed to the 'social,' 'civilized,' 'scientific,' 'improved' agricultural techniques being developed on the slave plantations. The latter discourses are continued today to legitimize such state, corporation, and mega-farm controlled 'modern' technologies as the chemical fertilizers and pesticides of the

[133] The maroon-plantation undercommons relations have many parallels to the complex relationships of resistance, expropriation, trade, enslavement, and evasion that James C. Scott theorizes of the long history in Southeast Asia between anarchistic, swidden agriculture, highland peoples and the more state-like, hierarchically organized, large-scale agriculture based, lowland peoples (Scott 2009). A key difference in my theorization from Scott's is that he tends to fall back on modernist dichotomies of 'nature' vs. 'society' while I trouble these and try to replace them with other concepts, including the non-modernist language of commons, common, and undercommons.

'Green Revolution,' genetically modified organisms, and factory farms (cf. e.g., Scott 1998, Mitchell 2002, Pachirat 2011, Patel 2012). Compared to the agriculture projects of coloniality/modernity, the food production practices innovated with the inter-mixing of traditions and body-and-place-situated study in maroon commons present an alternative possible, communal future of agriculture—one that can still be seen today in the continuance of indigenous and African traditions as well as in cooperatively-run, decolonial/abolitionist movement-embedded farms that reclaim land, such as with the Landless Workers Movement in Brazil and some urban farms in the U.S., such as cooperative, movement-embedded farms in Los Angeles, Detroit, Minneapolis, Durham, and other cities (Patel 2012; Zibechi 2012).

Part of the reason that the colonial differences deployed in modernist/colonialist discourses are so effective at de-legitimizing the maroon communities' success in achieving a highly sustainable level of agricultural organization—more in harmony with their non-human environment than anything achieved by white 'modern civilization'—is that this difference (of 'natural'/'social') obscures the ways in which the Maroons intertwined their practices of food and water security with those of military security *through* their harmonious relationships with both the non-human environment and with other human communities. In the modernist discourse, the 'social' side of the colonial difference entails the attempt to control any 'natural' territory and to use bordering practices to distinguish its controlled 'insides' of private or public property from its 'outsides' of both 'wild nature' and other demarcations of property. Seen through this discourse, the Maroons are disqualified from participation in 'civilized society' because they do not establish rigid borders. In opposition to the fences that the slave plantation

owners erect around their fields to enclose and protect their private property, the Maroons were cautious about demarcating the borders of their territories, especially not with such visible markings that would make them susceptible to easy detection. Rather, the porosity of their territorial borders is an integral part of their movements of association, including their openings to the networks of *marronage* that were constituted with precarious connections between the maroon communities and the slave communities on the plantations as well as other communities. These networks' tenuous capacities to enact undercommons relations with the plantations—subverting the latter's rigidly constructed boundaries—are the source of widespread "fear of depredation" amongst the white slavers and other whites who see the boundaries of their identities as 'individuals' to be homologous with the boundaries of their territorial property (Thompson 2006, 132).[134] The relations Maroons practiced across their contingently constructed, flexible inner/outer borders of maroon commons enabled them to defend their communities from attack while also allowing them to be porous enough to elude detection with camouflage that mimicked the normal appearance of the terrain, with the movement of bodies necessary for communication with the informal networks of cooperation between communities. The latter movements included the Maroons' expropriation of resources, tools, weapons, and provisions from plantations, often in collaboration with the slave communities on the plantations, as well as relations of trade and mutual aid with the

[134] The Fugitive Slave Laws were instituted and enforced more to address this white fear in both the North and South, to discipline them into remaining loyal to the white supremacist state, than to address an audience of black people, as the latter's desires for freedom could hardly be bounded by a law from a state whose legitimacy was founded upon their oppression (Thompson 2006, 141).

latter, with other maroon communities, and with both indigenous and poor white communities (202, 208, 258).[135]

Far from this being a merely monetary or debt-based economic network, the forms of exchange were not only between different types of goods with calculable values but were often based on relationships of trust and a sense of mutual obligation, and thus the form of goods also included types of information, especially about "military expeditions being organized against" the Maroons (258). Thus, the communicative practices of the *marronage* networks of informal cooperation and study were an integral part of the maroon communities' practices of physical security and defense. Not only did the enslavers deploy their own self-organized hunting parties to attempt to re-capture the Maroons, but also they collaborated with the state, pushing the state to use its repressive mechanisms of police and military, resulting in the expansions of the states to create "a special administrative machinery and specialized human and material resources," for the surveillance, pursuit, capture, destruction, and punishment of Maroons and their communities (94). Against such counter-insurgency and repression, the maroon communities practiced extensive study of the security features of the prospective sites for their settlements as well as in their design and construction, such as creating ingenious, camouflaged defense systems, hiding paths and entrances, and locating their dwellings "scattered in the settlements to make it difficult for expeditionary forces to surprise all the inhabitants at once and to permit unimpeded flight" (183).[136] Careful study and planning

[135] These relations of support went both ways, as "plantation workers often depended upon Maroon supplies of goods to meet pressing needs" (258).

[136] Their defense systems included, sometimes "a combination of palisades, trenches or ditches, traps and stakes," and moats with "hidden underwater paths," all of which were ingeniously "predicated not only making it as difficult as possible for military expeditions to breach the fortifications, but also to enable relatively quick and easy escape" (Thompson 2006, 189-190). Further, they engaged in continual study of the various possible security defects in their terrains including the paths of their movements of association

of the porosity, contingency, and selective in/visibility and in/formality of their communities' borders and paths of movement were paramount for their survival and flourishing.

Although the *marronage* practices of fugitive escape, community building, cooperation, and security enacted covert subversions of the value practices of the white, capitalist, colonial state, the maroon communities also constituted the bases for developing more formal, overt resistances against the latter as well.[137] One of the key ties that bound together the members of the maroon communities was not only their desire to escape their situation of enslavement but, also, their desire to destroy "a common foe": the environment that had created that situation for them and that continued imposing it on their loved ones and many others with whom they felt solidarity (84). Maroon communities engaged in plotting resistance within the plantations in collaboration with the slave communities on them, including individual and collective escapes, work slowdowns and stoppages, and violent uprisings. The maroon communities' capabilities as insurgents added more powerful resources and strategies to the plantation-based revolts, including their development through study of military tactics of hit-and-run, ambush, "firing from the tops of trees," "running zig-zag," firing at soldiers when they were traversing difficult terrain, such as swamps, and using camouflage (197-198). Collaboration and "continuous communication" across autonomous maroon communities

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within the networks, such as the possibility of their tracks tipping off their presence to pursuers, which they sought to avoid as they "deliberately took many detours on the way to them," and "heavy rains, especially those producing floods, often proved a blessing to the Maroons in this respect since they obliterated their tracks" (196).

[137] On the distinction between 'subversion' and 'resistance,' see Papadopoulos et al 2008.

enabled them to increase their defensive and offensive military capabilities and their chances of survival.[138]

Beyond the countless examples of guerilla warfare clashes with plantation owners and state military, some notable examples of *marronage* enabling widespread resistance were Nat Turner's rebellion, the First and Second Seminole Wars, and, most importantly, the Haitian Revolution, for which the maroon communities have been called the "germ of revolution" and a "war academy" (57). Although maroon communities had developed revolutionary consciousness in other countries and begun to carry out revolutionary plans, the Haitian revolution, 1791-1804, was the only Maroon and slave rebellion that was carried out successfully to national, anti-colonial revolution (Thompson 2006, 320; Dubois 2004; Blackburn 2011). In the United States, a key role that *marronage* played in the wider abolition movement was with the Underground Railroad in which individuals who flew to the Northern States and Canada were temporarily engaged in *marronage* during their flight and some maroon communities acted as connecting nodes in the network of fugitive escape. Beyond some individual former Maroons, such as Frederick Douglass, becoming leaders of the abolitionist movement, a more systemic, collective effect of *marronage* in the overthrow of slavery was its role in "making life miserable and short for a large number of enslavers," and thereby decreasing their will to fight for its perpetuation (Thompson 2006, 329). Most importantly for the possibilities of imagining decolonial/abolitionist futures, maroon communities demonstrated modes of

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[138] They "shared information, acted as hosts to the members of other communities on hunting and raiding expeditions, perhaps combined their strength in such expeditions, and offered a place of retreat … shared their resources, acted as each other's eyes and ears, and helped to ensure that they would not all be wiped out at once" (200). Practices of study were embedded in their military training that they used to "acquire some skill in the use of their weapons, camouflage, retreat, and so on," often drawing on the knowledge and skills of those who had been soldiers in Africa or those "who were recruited into the ranks of various colonial or national armies" (204-205).

association alternative to the white liberal state, alternatives that were temporarily realized on a large scale in the Seminoles, Haiti, Jamaica, Suriname, and Palmares. As opposed to the forms of exodus imagined with colonization, such as with the American Colonization Society and in later Black Nationalist forms such as Garveyism, the maroon communities presented a decolonial option for exodus, refusing to maintain the modernist/colonialist nation-state system that is bound up with the education-based regime of study and opting, instead, to make alternative worlds through study in the undercommons, with and for their and others' commons, and within and against the white capitalist state.

"Asking, we walk": Zapatismo as Study in the Undercommons

Considering the history of study in *marronage* opens up imaginal possibilities for decolonial/exodus/abolitionist movements across the Americas, and its resonances can be seen in some contemporary examples. These are exhibited perhaps most powerfully with Latin American social movements that are constituting "territories in resistance" (Zibechi 2012). I focus here on one of these movements: the Zapatistas in Mexico, highlighting the ways in which they incorporate study in the undercommons into their movement. The centrality of transformative encounters in Zapatismo is rooted in the historical episode in which indigenous communities of the Lacandón Jungle in Chiapas were put into sustained encounter with urban guerillas who had been involved in struggles in the Mexican cities since the late 1960s and who came to Chiapas in the early 1980s.

Although the guerillas' initial intention was to 'educate' the indigenous peoples with their Marxist revolutionary ideology, through becoming frustrated with their failed

attempts at ‘revolutionizing’ they were made to challenge their own faith in that modernist approach, learning from the indigenous peoples’ directly democratic practices of the “community assembly” and the principle of “*mandar obedeciendo*, ‘to lead by obeying’” (Khasnabish 2012, 230). Through this transformative pedagogy, “it was actually the defeat of the Marxist, modernist revolutionary ideology of the FLN cadres in the face of a radically different lifeworld where the roots of Zapatismo lie” (233). Through a years-long, sustained, energy-intensive process of autonomous study, in mutually pedagogical transformative encounters between the indigenous peoples and the guerillas, the latter found their political-ethical-social perspectives challenged and “reshaped by indigenous realities, a grounded and critical pedagogical moment,” out of which both the praxis of Zapatismo and the political organization of the EZLN were born (231). This mutually transformative study is poetically summarized in the Zapatista slogan, “*preguntando caminamos*, ‘asking, we walk’” (232). They committed “epistemological disobedience” against the “colonial differences” (Mignolo 2011) that they carried with their modernist revolutionary perspectives, as they “began to realize that indigenous notions of time, history, and reality were fundamentally different from what they had been taught to believe” (Khasnabish 2012, 231; Harvey 1998, 165). The Zapatistas’ contemporary autonomous study projects include “more than 300 schools built in communities and villages by the locals themselves,” and they attempt “to integrate the schools into the community and the struggle” (Zibechi 2012, 136). In the community-embedded, “territorially rooted” schools in Chiapas, this “de-institutionalization of space” and “integration of time” is seen with how children are

involved in constructing the program, there are no grades, and "the whole group does not proceed until everyone is on the same level, so no one is failed" (28, 137).

Beyond the enactment of Zapatismo's liberatory pedagogy in the autonomous communities of Chiapas, it also occurs through transnational encounters with movement actors around the world who are working in networks of solidarity with the Zapatistas and each other. The process of "the transnationalized encounters between Zapatismo and those who have proven so receptive to its radical, unclosed lesson plan" and "the pedagogical moments attached to it are deeply enmeshed in the living contexts in which they occur," thereby shaping powerful social movements, "not from some singularly important revolutionary subject but through an unending process of critical encounter that reshapes all those involved" (Khasnabish 2012, 237). To demonstrate this in relation to study in the undercommons, I examine how two movement-embedded social centers in the US— El Kilombo Intergaláctico in Durham, NC and the Mexican Cultural Center in Santa Ana, CA—have engaged in transnational relationships with the Zapatistas and other movements in Latin America while struggling with the conditions of their places under the continuation of the legacy of white supremacist colonialist, capitalist institutions in the 'new Jim Crow' era of dropout crises, mass incarceration, multi-culturalism, colorblind racism, apartheid schooling, border patrol, racial profiling, and deportations. Through interviews with organizers of these social centers, I investigate the ways in which they make places much like maroon communities but with more formally structured programming—including free classes, community gardens, cultural gatherings, and solidarity economies—that enable study for strengthening informal networks of

cooperation, fighting neo-colonial gentrification, and subverting colonial-state-capitalist control.

The El Kilombo Intergaláctico social center most clearly brings together the themes of my chapter, as their name itself combines *marronage* with Zapatismo. 'Intergaláctico' is a reference to the Zapatistas' "Encuentro Intergaláctico," the first gathering in Chiapas in 1996, involving 6,000 anti-and-alter-globalization movement activists.[139] They hosted a second Encuentro in 2007, which "brought together representatives of poor farmers from 13 mostly-southern countries to swap experiences with Zapatista base communities in the highlands, the canyons, and the jungle of Chiapas, and develop mechanisms for mutual self-defense against the ravages of neo-liberalism" (Ross 2007). The social center in Durham, NC adopted this word in their name partly to signal their affinity and solidarity with the Zapatistas and partly to note their commitments to principles of Zapatismo, including the creation of space-times for critically transformative pedagogical encounters of people across cultures and nations. In addition to enacting these principles in their work with local communities in Durham, some of the organizers of the social center are active in transnational solidarity work with the Zapatistas, including traveling to and working with the autonomous communities in

[139] "Formally dubbed a 'Forum In Defense of Humanity and Against Neo-liberalism', the conclave drew 6,000 activists from five continents to the wilds of Chiapas's Lacandon jungle to brainstorm on the growing menace of the corporate globalization of the Planet Earth (the World Trade Organization had just been formulated the previous year). The event is often considered to have been the seedbed for historic demonstrations against the WTO in Seattle 1999 from which the anti-globalization movement blossomed. The gathering in a jungle clearing on a Zapatista ejido with the haunting name of La Realidad ('The Reality') 11 years ago was nicknamed the 'Intergalactica' because in his convocation the rebels' spokesperson Subcomandante Marcos invited all sentient life forms from other planets in the galaxy to participate in the event. 'We don't know if they actually came to the first Intergalactica' Zapatista Lieutenant Colonel Moises mused recently, 'at least they never identified themselves.'" (Ross 2007)

Chiapas, actively participating in the Zapatista's 'Other Campaign,' and helping circulate the Zapatistas communiqués to a wide audience through their social media.[140]

The other part of their social center's name, El Kilombo, refers to their aligning their project with the history of *marronage* in the Americas. They explain the African origins of the word, El Kilombo as "the Bantu word for encampment," which "was taken up in the New World within the Portuguese sphere of influence to describe the societies of those African slaves and at times Indigenous peoples of the Americas that sought to end their enslavement through direct flight," and "in areas of French and British influence they were known as Maroon or Marron societies"[141]. They explain their use of the term thusly:

> what has attracted us to this word is the phenomena that called it into existence—slave flight. It is our contention that these runaway slave societies have a lot to teach all of us in our contemporary context. It is these runaways that first understood that it was their sweat and blood that made the "modern world" possible and that it was this same sweat and blood that could bring another such world into existence. It was thus these runaways that were able to demonstrate that liberation is not built through a life and death struggle against the slave-master, but rather through a life and death struggle for the construction of another life, another formation of daily habit, rituals, and beliefs that would in practice make the slave-master function obsolete. (El Kilombo 2012)[142]

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[140] Interview with Alvaro Reyes, 6/8/12. Our interview itself was a transnational critical encounter, via Skype, as Alvaro spoke with me from an autonomous community in Chiapas while I sat in Minneapolis. For many Zapatista communiqués circulated through El Kilombo's website, see http://www.elkilombo.org/ , and for their 'info hub' on Zapatismo, see http://www.elkilombo.org/info-hub/zapatismo/. For El Kilombo organizers' reporting from their travels and participation with the Other Campaign in 2006, see their blog http://www.elkilombointergalactico.blogspot.com/ .

[141] From El Kilombo's explanation of their name on their website, "What's in a Name?" - http://www.elkilombo.org/about/whats-in-a-name/

[142] Their explanation continues: "In this respect it may be true, as many scholars have observed, that the modern notion of guerrilla warfare is in many respects directly indebted to these runaways and the military resistance they exerted against their would-be captors. But in this sense our insight must go further in order to understand, as did our Maroon predecessors, that an effective struggle against our captors is the one we wage on a daily basis with our hands and tools to create what has yet to be, and not the one limited to tanks, guns, and bullets directed at the destruction of what has already been. Finally, we have been very conscious of our usage of this term, and we would like to make clear that it is not a metaphorical borrowing, it is a necessary acknowledgment of a gift handed down to us by courageous Afrikans and Indigenous peoples, and a commitment to both flight and the trans- and inter-racial character of the original Kilombos."

Bringing together the lessons of Zapatismo with the lessons of the Kilombos—including those of the Maroon communities that existed in the mountains and swamps of North Carolina—the El Kilombo Intergalático social center and the people who compose it through their participation drive home the importance of study through and for struggles in the undercommons.

One key lesson for movement participants that I learned from interviewing one of the El Kilombo organizers, Alvaro Reyes, is about the need to avoid an 'activist' mode—a kind of modernist revolutionary approach of 'educating the masses' that the urban guerillas had to break down through their study in critical encounters with the indigenous peoples of Chiapas.[143] Instead of such 'activist' continuations of the education-based regime of study, movements should participate in study with the informal networks of cooperation that already exist in marginalized communities, whether in the indigenous communities of Chiapas or the "underground economy of the urban poor" in American cities (Venkatesh 2006). Reyes stressed the long, arduous yet joyful process of learning how to build mutually meaningful relationships with people in those informal cooperative networks—connecting El Kilombo's Zapatismo-inspired organizational forms (in light of oppositional critiques of capitalism, racism, patriarchy, etc.) with the marginal communities' organizational forms, which already contain the propositional part of a radical social movement, the bases for building a world alternative to that of modernity/coloniality. A key element of the organizational forms they have developed is their 'community assemblies.' Everyone who participates in the different activities in the

[143] Interview with Alvaro Reyes, 6/8/12.

space is required to attend a monthly community assembly, which also includes a big meal and is their organization's central decision-making body. [144]

Activities and resources of study for community-building in and around the space include a lending library, computers for free classes and individual exploration, a kids play and learning zone, a regular speaker series, monthly salsa dancing events (both as a cultural activity and for fundraising to pay the rent), space for community and organizational meetings, cooperatively-run community gardens, collective housing, self-employment (through a house-cleaning collective), and meetings for organizing struggles around immigrant rights and against gentrification (such as, in 2011, working with the local Latin@ community to save a soccer field on a public park from being taken over by a charter school).[145] The organizers have engaged in these activities as undercommons in relation to the dominant institutions of government and education, such as through using the resources of the city government and the local universities (particularly, Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill, where some of the organizers and participants are undergraduates, graduate students, and professors), while trying to evade the recuperation of El Kilombo's community- and movement-based relationships into the modernist/colonialist projects of those institutions. Simultaneously, they push the people and places of the latter to de-link from their modernist/colonial practices and into more abolitionist/decolonial modes of being, such as through their organizing resistance

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[144] As of 6/8/12, there was simultaneously a youth assembly, led by a 16-year-old community activist. According to El Kilombo's website: "El Kilombo is rooted in our community assembly, the decision-making body of our organization. The assembly evaluates the programs at the center, discusses the needs of our community, makes decisions about program changes and innovations, establishes commissions (e.g. the health commission or community garden commission), and designates tasks. The community assembly is made up of people who have participated in our programs and studied in our seminars for a period of time, and who also have some commission responsibilities." - http://www.elkilombo.org/about/

[145] For pictures of the space that I took on a visit in March of 2011, including pictures of these activities and programming, with descriptions in Spanish, see http://www.elimeyerhoff.com/el_kilombo_reportback.htm

against the gentrification around the university campuses and the intertwined processes of increased segregation, policing, and exploitation of immigrants and African-Americans.

Although El Kilombo is the only social center in the U.S. (that I am aware of) that has made such explicit linkages between *marronage* and Zapatismo, there are some other social centers that are embarking on projects with similar dynamics of study in the undercommons in relation to movements of decoloniality/abolition/exodus. One example is El Centro Cultural de Mexico (the Mexican Cultural Center), in Santa Ana, CA, which also participates in Zapatismo and maintains transnational connections with autonomous communities in Mexico. Through interviews with one of El Centro's long-time organizers, Carolina Sarmiento, I have learned of the importance their project places on being grounded in the lived experiences of their participants' communities and in relation to their particular places and across the networks of relationships that give meaning to their lives.[146] Through the practices of autonomous study in their cultural programming and political organizing, they seek to amplify the local and transnationally interconnected networks of cooperation in and across the communities of Santa Ana, CA—which is 96% Latin@—and the communities in Mexico from which many of them have migrated and in which their families still live. Cultural programming and classes include Zumba (often intermixing political discussions with this dancing exercise), hip-hop and spoken word nights, movies and discussions, Son Jarocho (a practice of communal guitar playing and singing, often with movement-relevant lyrics), Aztec dance, and classes in art, English, and other subjects, many of which are tailored for young people, as well as events that bring cultural performers across the nation-state border with Mexico, both ways, to put

[146] Interview with Carolina Sarmiento, 6/25/12. For more on El Centro's programming and the public presentation of their mission, see http://www.el-centro.org/

on and share in cultural communication between their respective communities. Similarly to El Kilombo, they borrow the Zapatismo organizational model of directly democratic, consensus-based 'community assemblies' to enable their participants to become fully involved and invested in making decisions about the planning and programming of their space.

In comparing El Kilombo's and El Centro's approaches to study in the undercommons, one difference is that, while El Kilombo has been relatively open in their public presentation of themselves about their connections with Zapatismo and other radical social movements, El Centro has been more muted about their affiliations with radical movements and to present themselves with language—such as emphasizing 'communities' and 'culture' over 'movements' and 'decolonization'—that appears less confrontational to the projects of the state, capitalism, colonialism, and white supremacy. One main reason for this covertness, according to Sarmiento, is the location of El Centro as an island of Latin@ communities within Orange County, CA, one of the more conservative places in the U.S. Given that many of its participants and their families have a fugitive legal status as undocumented immigrants who are often scapegoated with the discourse of 'illegal immigrants'—which has historical resonance with the criminalizing discourse around 'Maroons'—their participants' need for evasion of detection by the state's police and immigration authorities, combined with the pressure on the state from anti-immigrant sentiment of the largely conservative white public in 'OC,' requires that El Centro take concerted care and precaution in the way that they represent themselves to wider public audiences. An exceptionally dense, complex set of practices of study in the undercommons is evident—and could be analyzed in much greater depth—in El Centro's

participants' movements of selective visibility and invisibility to different audiences of different aspects of themselves, particularly of their political affiliations and principles, aiming to make and amplify relationships with their local and transnational migrant communities and with potential allies while avoiding detection, recuperation, and repression.

The vital importance of careful study for the planning and enactment of such movements of in/visibility was realized in a battle with a real estate corporation and the city government that El Centro engaged in 2011, in which they struggled to keep their spaces against the forces of gentrification in downtown Santa Ana. The latter sought to gain from El Centro's fostering of value for the real estate with their arts-and-culture based community while simultaneously raising the rent so as to push them out in order to create an area more friendly to business and consumerism. El Centro is making strides toward winning this battle through mobilization of their participants' communities while also engaging in careful construction of their image in the popular media through press releases and public events—deft maneuvers with capabilities and relationships they have created through autonomous study over years of critical, local/transnational encounters.

Examining the El Centro and El Kilombo social centers concludes this Chapter, giving contemporary examples of the complex relations that I historically identified with *marronage*: how practices of exodus, abolitionism, and decolonization can be combined in ways that allow participants to grapple with the tensions of the 'within & against // with & for' problematic, focusing particularly on the role of tensions between different regimes of study. I framed my narrative as a counter-measure to the ways in which abolitionists' retaining of modernist/colonialist ideals, particularly in narratives around

education, and their de-valuing discourses, such as around ‘waste,’ obscure the centrality of alternative regimes of study in such movements. Through this critique, I elaborated the theory of commons, the common, and undercommons in relation to these historical and contemporary movements, drawing out oppositions between the education-based regime of study in the modernist/colonial project and alternative regimes of study in the undercommons. In the following Chapter, I continue to extend the articulation of my theory in relation to an example that returns the thread of this dissertation to the debates around higher education. By engaging in militant co-research with a free university known as EXCO, I flesh out more of the complexities in the oppositions between the education-based regime of study and alternative regimes. Using this theory, I frame more concrete recommendations for how movements that engage with the ‘within and against’ / ‘with and for’ problematic can create institutions, such as free universities, for enabling alternative regimes of study intertwined with the commons of marginalized communities.

Chapter 4

EXCO of the Twin Cities:
A Free University for Alternative Regimes of Study

'What should learning be for?' Why do we so rarely hear that question asked in schools and universities? The possibility for raising the question seems to be perpetually pre-empted within the institutions of the education-based regime of study, which (re)produce an imagined trajectory of teaching and learning embedded within a modernist, meritocratic, and individualizing worldview. The color-, gender-, and class-blind trajectory that schools prescribe is premised on one's successful advancement through academic stages and levels with the narrative ending in the transition to a job. The broader question 'what *is* learning for?' is already answered by this narrative as participation in capitalist, neo-colonial institutions.

Against the continual burying of these questions, this chapter is part of a militant co-research project with an anarchistic free school, Experimental Community Education of the Twin Cities (EXCO), which emerged from struggles for greater equity, labor rights, and campus democracy in higher education. Offering between 40 and 70 free and open courses per semester, scattered across the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN, EXCO is a free school dedicated to creating an infrastructure for community- and movement-embedded study, with the principles that 'everyone can teach or take classes and all classes are free.' This chapter includes research that I conducted with two of my fellow EXCO organizers: David Boehnke, based on our experiences of forming and expanding the organization, and Erin Dyke, based on our experiences of co-facilitating a class on 'Radical Pedagogy' with an eye toward improving EXCO's facilitator support

practices.[147] In this chapter, I analyze this research in light of the problematic and theories that I have developed in the earlier chapters of the dissertation. I developed this theory in intimate relationship with my involvement in the EXCO organization. Throughout, I shift between the voices of the 3rd person and the 1st person singular and plural to indicate when I am speaking as either myself or together with my co-writers and co-organizers.

In the first part of the chapter, I narrate a story of EXCO: describing how EXCO emerged in a context of struggles, how it functions, and comparing and contrasting it with its historical and contemporary influences, which include experimental colleges, anarchist free skools, and popular education in movements. The main way that I distinguish EXCO from its influences is through highlighting its organizers' innovative and intentional approach to grappling with the tensions between institutions of the education-based regime of study and alternative projects for radical movement-embedded study. EXCO attempts to compose an infrastructure for liberating, directly democratic, desegregated, community-based study projects while, simultaneously, creating means for realizing those value practices on a wider scale through transforming the dominant institutions of education and other interconnected institutions, resisting their mechanisms of recuperation, and re-appropriating their resources. Recognizing the complex tensions involved in walking these multiple paths, and drawing on the theory developed in this dissertation, I deploy new concepts for understanding what EXCO seeks to accomplish and how its innovations could overcome the limitations of its predecessors. This new conceptual framework—'conflicting commons,' 'regimes of study,' 'the common,' and

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[147] David Boehnke and I initially intended our research to be published as a paper invited for a special issue of *ACME: An International E-Journal of Critical Geography* on 'Anarchist and Autonomous Marxist Geographies.' We eventually withdrew it from publication, for various reasons, but mainly because David stopped organizing with EXCO during the revision process and I felt that it would have been unethical to finish and publish the paper without his input. With Erin Dyke, I have written another paper, which was accepted for publication in *The Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, for a special issue on 'Justice Work in and out of Schools,' which will appear in September 2013.

'undercommons'— provides guidance for understanding the tensions EXCO creates from trying to struggle *within, against, and beyond* the institutions of the education-based regime of study. EXCO organizers must negotiate multiple tensions: on the one hand, creating an infrastructure for excluded, 'minor' actors to engage in collective study about the value practices of their commons and communities, and to articulate connections on their own terms with the resources and communities in 'major' institutions—e.g., governments, universities, schools, and non-profit organizations—and thereby, to resist their marginalization and to change those institutions. On the other hand, EXCO organizers must create conditions for its participants to anticipate and avoid the infiltration of their commons by the value practices of the dominant institutions (e.g., those of the education-based regime of study), and thus, to subvert the recuperation of the creative energies enlisted in their common projects. I highlight the importance of mutually supportive, affective relationships for EXCO organizing, as they constitute the grounds for people to value and reproduce their communities of resistance outside and beyond—i.e., imperceptible to—the representational policing of the dominant institutions. Although EXCO organizers have attempted to re-structure their organization in ways that foster such relationships, they have faced many failures. In order to offer better guidance, I critically analyze EXCO in light of its key tensions: between, on the one hand, building relationships rooted in, and accountable to, particular community-and-place-based networks of cooperation and histories of struggle, and on the other hand, coordination and communication within and across these communities in ways that critically break down power hierarchies.

Beyond dealing with these tensions on a broader organizational level, they are articulated on the more micro-political level of EXCO courses as well. Thus, in the second part of the chapter, I dive deeper into an exploration of these tensions by drawing

on experiences with co-facilitating an EXCO course to investigate how subtle dispositions from so-called 'normal' education infiltrate activities of aspirationally 'radical' situations of pedagogy and study. I theorize our practices of grappling with these tensions as a kind of 'playful work,' centered around four themes: *the geo- and body-political situatedness of knowledge*, *space-time*, *a/effective relationships*, and *pedagogy and study*. Within these themes, I take up and trouble modernist and colonial dichotomies—representations and reality, space and time, society and nature, individual and collective, and primitive (uneducated) and civilized (educated)—which we view as subtle sources of obstacles we experienced in our class and, more broadly, in our free school and other aspirationally 'radical' organizations. Subscribing to these conceptual separations, and coming to take them for granted, both happens through and serves to legitimate the institutions of education, or the processes of making people "ready" for adulthood, work, individual autonomy, and governance (Moten & Harney, 2004; Lesko, 2001). As a counter-force, I offer tactics for organizers of EXCO and other movements to create infrastructures for de-linking from the imaginal trajectories of education and composing pedagogical situations of study in the undercommons for decolonial, abolitionist, communal futures. Toward articulating these theories as more concrete guidance for organizers of free universities, I conclude with recommendations for an infrastructure that could support course facilitators in expanding their capacities for composing non-and-anti-educational regimes of study in their courses.

'Access = Quality': Need Blind Admissions at Macalester

In the Fall of 2005, Macalester College, an elite liberal arts college located in St. Paul, Minnesota announced that it would change its admissions policy from "need blind"

to "need aware" admissions, a policy that seemed to many to be a type of affirmative action for rich people.[148] A reoccurring goal of the Board of Trustees, the President announced the policy change as a financial necessity, with backing from a cadre of professors and staff. Student reaction to this announcement was immediate, and would be the key, if insufficient, counterforce to the college's plans. The first victory of this organized protest was to force the administration to shift their presentation of the issue, from "financial crisis" to "careful balance of priorities." This shift in values was framed by the President as a delicate balance between "access and quality" with a heavy emphasis on the need to keep up in the *US News and World Report* rankings, with the corresponding imperative to spend more per student and compete for the 4% of students who could still pay more for college. In response, protesters emphasized the lack of financial necessity, attacked the legitimacy of the rankings, and put forward the idea that "access = quality," in an attempt to make clear that they wanted something entirely different from their educations than that proposed by the President and Board of Trustees.[149] Nevertheless, grassroots responses to the change were insufficient, both organizationally and rhetorically, and the struggle ended in early 2006.

Much became clear for the protesters in the course of reflecting retrospectively on this struggle, which was an intentional, semester-long process (DNBAM 2006). To broaden their analysis, they developed critical perspectives on the system in which we were struggling. Racial and economic inequalities in access to, and success within, higher education have been increasing nationally, even as a bachelor's degree is replacing a high

[148] For a summary and collection of reports on this struggle, see DNBAM, 2006.
[149] Much of this account is drawn from the perspective of an EXCO organizer (David, my co-researcher) who was a protester at Macalester, but he does not claim to speak for all of the protesters.

school diploma as a necessity for employment (Berg 2010).[150] Similarly, the structures that brought about this change—national competition for "excellence" and the richest students—put Macalester in a weak position in a game it is unlikely to win. Yet, the Macalester administration had found no solution but to intensify their investment in the game. In analyzing what universities lose sight of in their obsession with rankings, the protesters saw that colleges have clear impacts on local communities while having little accountability to them. Colleges have been connected into national and global competition for rankings that fail to include such accountability. On this view, 'community' seems to be abstracted away as either "those who do not live on campus" or "those who might benefit students' learning."

These critical framings motivated the Macalester activists to problematize college programming that presents itself as "education for social change," and to see these as connected to the control of student learning and labor, separating them from actually existing communities. As such, they saw giving students more control over their educations and a broadening of what is seen as "educational" as part and parcel of the push towards creating educational institutions that are rooted in communities. With all of this in mind they sought to build a college that they could run themselves, and that would expand the type of studying that they could engage in and broaden the pool of those involved, with particular focus on creating mutually supportive relationships between Macalester and surrounding communities, and between study and liberatory social movements. During this time, one of their organizers learned about the Experimental

[150] Inequalities of access to higher education are intertwined with inequalities of conditions for success in prior education. The average U.S. high school completion rates for whites (75% in 2001) are far higher than for African Americans (50%) and Hispanics (53%), and these inequalities are exacerbated by the effects of poverty and segregation (Swanson 2004). On the apartheid-like conditions of the U.S. education system, see Kozol 2006.

College model at Oberlin College in Ohio, and that seemed close to the kind of alternative institution they wanted to create.

The Basics of EXCO's Infrastructure

Drawing on their meager knowledge of alternative education traditions—and with little organizing experience, connections, or plan—they began the project. Initially naming it 'Experimental College of the Twin Cities,' they supported six classes in the first semester, then twelve, then twenty. Over the next seven years, its capacity grew tremendously—supporting up to seventy courses (with between one and fifteen meetings each) per semester—with the founding of three new organizing groups, based around a major public research university, a community college, and a Latin@ community, providing new possibilities and challenges. In 2013, EXCO's all-volunteer organizers are continuing to transform EXCO into a focused and sustainable organization.

Throughout EXCO's growth and expansion, its infrastructure has been composed of seven key, overlapping processes. Organizers focus on *outreach/inreach* to find and develop relationships with diverse community partners, and to maintain and expand the community of organizers. For building these relationships and strengthening them with joyful experiences, EXCO holds *events*, including celebrations, reflection dinners, and socials. To find class facilitators and to advertize their classes, organizers and facilitators do *publicity* through fliers, an e-newsletter, facebook, tabling, and other media. *Facilitator support* happens through finding spaces for classes, distributing money for supplies and honorariums to facilitators who could not teach otherwise, and putting on orientations and pedagogy workshops. Behind the scenes, *web technologies*—especially EXCO's website, run with Drupal, a free, open-source software— are crucial for

enabling class registration, publicity, and social networking. Also, despite making the classes free and paying no wages, *financial accounting* is still important as funds are raised through grants, donations, and events in order to pay for class supplies, honorariums, events, and publicity. Lastly, as the basis for the continuance and enhancement of all of these processes, *organizer sustainability* is fostered through preparation for meetings, developing organization structure, retreats, and finding and training new organizers.

To the extent that these processes are performed *well*, the organizers can create enabling conditions for generative, joyous, anti-oppressive types of learning in and through EXCO classes. A key innovation in EXCO's organizational form was adopted in spring 2010 with the creation of working groups around facilitator support, events, and publicity. The working groups meet occasionally, more often during the beginnings of semesters, and the whole, 'citywide' group meets twice per month. See *Figure 1* for an illustration of the order and interaction of these processes and groups in a typical session of EXCO classes.

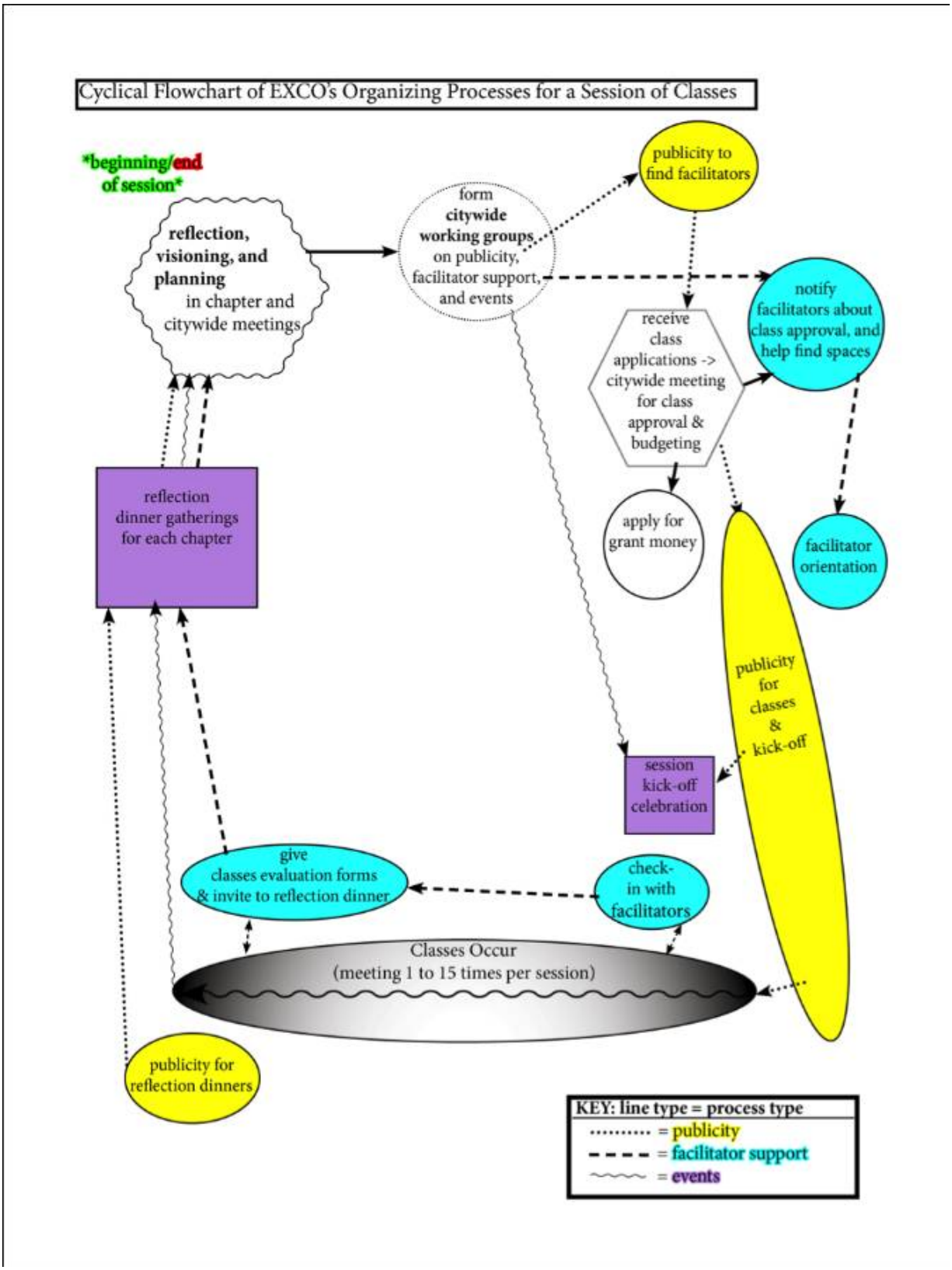
Cyclical Flowchart of EXCO's Organizing Processes for a Session of Classes
beginning/end of session
reflection, visioning, and planning in chapter and citywide meetings
form citywide working groups on publicity, facilitator support, and events
publicity to find facilitators
notify facilitators about class approval, and help find spaces
receive class applications -> citywide meeting for class approval & budgeting
apply for grant money
facilitator orientation
reflection dinner gatherings for each chapter
publicity for classes & kick-off
session kick-off celebration
give classes evaluation forms & invite to reflection dinner
check-in with facilitators
Classes Occur (meeting 1 to 15 times per session)
publicity for reflection dinners
KEY: line type = process type
..... = publicity
- - - = facilitator support
~~~ = events

Figure 1
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The Value Practices of EXCO's Commons: For Alternative Regimes of Study

At least three main types of study occur in EXCO classes, recognizing that these are almost always intertwined in any given class. First, in EXCO classes such as computer programming and bike or auto mechanics, the participants and facilitators co-produce knowledge and skills that they find useful for a job or improvements in their lives. Second, more intangible goods, such as affective relationships, happiness, creativity, and self-confidence, are often created, whether through a knitting circle, dance class, or reading group. Third, participants can transform the world (and themselves) through a class that contributes to a collective, prepares for the creation of such a group, or puts on a project or performance, such as in the Bike Feminism class, which created a feminist bike collective called Dames on Frames; the Dakota Decolonization: Solidarity Education for Allies classes, which led to the creation of a collective called Unsettling Minnesota; the ongoing Fermentation classes, out of which emerged a food bartering network; and the Art Shanty class, which built an ice shanty with an art installation around the theme of participatory cartography.[151]

EXCO's principle of 'free classes' destabilizes the motivations for attending and participating in classes of "getting one's money's worth" and of earning grades or credentials. Participants are, then, 'free'—in the negative sense of 'liberated'—to produce their own motivations on the basis of their own lived experiences, desires, and needs. Through an EXCO class, the participants also enjoy a positive sense of becoming 'free': gaining capacities for self-organizing their own projects of collective study. Through their class discussions, the participants can redefine their singular and common

[151] For Dames on Frames' zines, see http://microcosmpublishing.com/catalog/zines/2448/ . For Unsettling Minnesota, see http://unsettlingminnesota.org/ . For the Map Shanty, see http://mapshanty.com/ . (Accessed 5/19/10.)

desires for learning skills and knowledge as collectively validated needs and as bases for designing their class's collaborative study activities.[152] For an ideal of 'academic freedom' in this regime of study within, against, and beyond the education-based one, EXCO's organizers aim to create enabling conditions for *all* of its participants to enjoy the freedom to engage in collective practices of teaching, studying, and knowledge production. In competition and conflict with the dominant universities that are embedded in the education-based regime that defines the purpose of professors holding academic freedom as continuing the projects of modernity, the 'why' for participants to hold academic freedom in EXCO is for enabling their composition of an alternative world (which I advocate should be in collaboration with abolitionist/decolonial movements).

Whether or not EXCO's participants can enact the potentials for collective study in their classes depends partly on the facilitators stepping up to the challenges of designing the class environment and pedagogy. To help facilitators and participants in collectively facing these challenges, EXCO organizers' role is to create infrastructures of support for self-organizing study projects. Organizers often participate in the class's study practices from their perspectives as facilitators and participants, and what they learn, thereby, crucially informs their organizing approaches, such as in creating orientations and pedagogy workshops for facilitators. In this respect, the distinction we make between the roles of 'facilitators,' 'participants,' and 'organizers' blurs, because all of them share some responsibilities for creating the conditions for study in the classes, and for improving these conditions as well, including deciding upon what values should guide their improvement. Thereby, EXCO makes a fundamental break from the

[152] I loosely draw this view of needs as the becoming-necessary of contingent encounters between forces, including desires, from Deleuze 2006.

modernist/colonialist assumptions of education that give monopolies on decision-making powers over the space of the class to teachers and over the space of the school or university to administrators (and to teachers to the extent that they can win power, such as through unions) (Prakash and Esteva 2008). The tensions produced by EXCO's shift away from these assumptions of education are profound, and its organizers have only begun to grapple with them. At the level of a course, key tensions are from the challenges of designing classes that create conditions for fostering participants' motivations to attend and engage: on the one hand, replacing the motivations of grades, credits, tuition, and the normal authority relations of education; and, on the other hand, competing for participants' devotion of their energies with the capitalist world in which such motivations of the education-based regime of study are hegemonic. At the level of the broader organization, a central tension is the challenge of creating an infrastructure of support for alternative regimes of study in the courses without reproducing the education-based regime's relations of power, subjectivity, and knowledge that are bound up with white supremacist, colonial, hetero-patriarchal capitalism. In the following section, I examine how EXCO's predecessors have tried and, to varying extents, failed to grapple with these tensions, as a preliminary step for using my new conceptual framework to offer better guidance for EXCO.

Influences, Principles, and Tensions

The principles that motivate EXCO's organizers are those that have stuck with us from our reflections on our histories of struggle in light of our learning about other radical movements and struggles over regimes of study as well as about other types of alternative educational projects: Experimental Colleges, Free Schools, Anarchistic

Education, and Popular Education.[153] We see EXCO as partly a synthesis of these different, overlapping types of projects, but we also recognize that combining the principles from these projects creates several interrelated tensions in practice. In contrast with Experimental Colleges' and anarchist free skools' tendencies to situate themselves, respectively, within the terrain of established institutions or outside that terrain, EXCO has positioned itself—similarly to some popular education projects—on and across those boundaries. Learning from other Experimental Colleges, EXCO has a resource-using relationship with universities of the education-based regime (via student groups that allow access to grant money and class spaces), but at the same time it adopts the anarchist free skools' critique of these universities for their playing key roles in the perpetuation of white supremacist, colonial, hetero-patriarchal capitalism. Further, it takes up the spirit of popular education to translate that critique into a practical project for connecting an infrastructure for community-embedded study with radical movements.

Yet, EXCO goes beyond most popular education projects as well by seeking to focus that imperative for radical change onto schools and universities themselves. This extension of EXCO's critique onto the established education institutions is one that its organizers made explicit in its historical origins in university struggles. However, I contend that EXCO organizers (including myself) had never articulated this critique in a clear and coherent enough way for guiding our organizing practices. Thus, I see my project here, in conversation with other EXCO organizers (especially Erin Dyke), as a call for, and beginning of, a shift in EXCO's self-description toward such a better understanding. A central point that I highlight in this shift is the concept of 'regimes of study,' and I call for differentiating between types of institutions of study—schools and

[153] See Chapter 1 for more background on these alternative education movements.

universities, including the dominant ones and alternative ones such as EXCO—on the basis of the extents to which they enact the education-based regime of study and/or alternative regimes. The neglect of EXCO organizers to make such distinctions can be seen in the story of how, when faced with a threat from the Minnesota state government that, if we did not remove 'college' from our name, EXCO would be fined an exorbitantly high amount of money. Instead of holding strong to our name and fighting the state to retain it, we capitulated and replaced 'college' with 'community education,' partly because we lacked a sufficiently critical understanding of the political implications of the concepts behind these different names.

Recognizing that the education-based regime of study is inextricably bound up with the project of modernity/coloniality, for decolonial purposes, the ideal that I am promoting for EXCO is that it should seek to create a new form of institution that creates enabling conditions for alternative regimes of study that are embedded with abolitionist/decolonial/exodus movements. Simultaneously, this infrastructure should create means, not only for exodus from the dominant institutions, but also for transforming these institutions and re-directing their resources into common projects for creating alternative communal futures. In crossing the boundaries between education institutions and community-embedded study, EXCO faces a further web of tensions around avoiding recuperation of its relationships within the dominant institutions, both on the level of its broader organization and on a more micro-political level within its courses, as facilitators and participants bring into EXCO's study situations the dispositions and expectations that they have acquired in education institutions and the broader modernist/colonialist world.

Faced with these tensions, the easier path for EXCO organizers to follow would be to fall on one side or another of these tensions by limiting the scope of their ambitions to the well-developed blueprints of its four main predecessors. Such a limited project, however, is not the only possibility. Instead, I argue that EXCO organizers can push themselves to create something new that attempts to realize all of the desires for their project—the different ideals associated with the imaginal trajectories of their predecessors—simultaneously. In doing so, they can take inspiration from the Black Campus Movement that sought to create a completely new university, the Black University, with its decolonial, abolitionist relations to the established universities (Rogers 2012). Yet, embarking on this uncharted path—making the ground by walking—leaves EXCO organizers in the precarious position of lacking the blueprints for achieving some kind of sustainability and resilience, which makes them more susceptible to the temptation of falling back on the stability of the dominant forms of institutions and subjectivities. In order to find some sustainability without slipping into any of these fixed institutional forms, the EXCO organizers have had to develop practices of continual experimentation with, and transformation of, their institutional forms, while simultaneously maintaining a core stability through affective, trusting, place-and-community-grounded relationships, co-constituted with practices of collective study. We realized the importance of such relationships from reflecting comparatively upon the histories of the first two chapters of EXCO, noting a commonality across them that they were both dependent on strong affective relationships developed through experiences of political struggle together in the particular places and communities of university campuses. The following section narrates the history of emergence of the second EXCO

chapter, drawing out key aspects of the problematic—how affective relationships can be built in a way that makes EXCO's organizing sustainable while grappling with its tensions through collective study—that will be addressed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

'Students are Workers': Struggles at the U of M for Access, Unions, and Living Wages

Within two years of beginning EXCO we greatly expanded our organizing capacity through the creation of another chapter out of the University of Minnesota (U of M). Across town from Macalester, at the U of M, the administration was similarly pushing their school to become more competitive in institutional rankings. Through a plan called "Strategic Positioning," the administration sought to foster greater competition between individuals and units within the University. The administration and "task forces" composed of faculty, students, and staff identified certain areas as "strategic initiatives" which were given more resources while cutting the funding of those areas judged as unimportant for the University's "global competitiveness." Just as protestors resisted a similar shift at Macalester, members of the University of Minnesota community responded in three particularly dramatic efforts.

As Macalester organizers were confronting the end of "need blind admissions," another major access battle was being waged and lost at the U of M. In 2004-5, students, faculty, and staff fought to save the General College, a program with supplemental instruction and advising to facilitate the transition to college for many first time college students, including many people of color and of economic disadvantage who initially did not meet the university's academic requirements. Some EXCO organizers from Macalester took part in this struggle. The relationships they developed and conversations

they had during the protests led them to see links between their institutions, to increase their sense of urgency, and to experience locally the national trends they had discovered in their research. They also learned of the blurriness between the identities of 'student' and 'worker,' as the students who desired to be most active in this struggle were often limited in doing so because they experienced the most precarious and unjust conditions.[154]

Around the same time at the U of M, graduate students were organizing a union drive in which some of the future EXCO organizers participated (including myself). During the unionization attempt (known as 'GradTRAC'), a key slogan was "grad students are workers," deployed with varying degrees of effectiveness depending on whether the grads considered themselves more as apprenticing professionals or as workers. Observing the barriers to the effective circulation of this slogan pushed us to raise questions about how to conceive the distinctions and overlaps between 'students' and 'workers.' On the one hand, redefining graduate students as 'workers' clarified the ways in which graduate education is a profit-making affair, shaped to cut labor and maximize profits from undergraduate tuition. On the other hand, with observing how the myriad pressures to professionalize for competition in the academic capitalist 'rat race' severely hinder graduate students from subscribing to the identity form of 'worker,' this highlighted our understandings of their tension-riddled existence as 'ambivalent educational selves.'

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[154] For example, two U of M students who were active in the fight to save General College, Iman Hassan and Sofi Shank, have spoken of how their older sisters, who were members of General College, were limited in their participation in the struggles—to varying extents depending on their relative privilege—by having to work jobs during college in order to afford the ever-increasing tuition. Iman and Sofi spoke about this at the conference, "Beneath the University, the Commons," in 2010, video of which can be viewed at: http://beneaththeu.org .

Another unit deemed "non-strategic" in Strategic Positioning was the clerical, technical, and health care workers represented by the union of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). In Fall 2007, AFSCME workers at the U of M went on strike when they saw the funds appropriated by the state legislature for their cost of living raises redirected toward the upper administration and tenure-stream faculty. During the barrage of actions in support of the AFSCME strike—including displaying buttons and signs with the slogan "we support U of M workers," a sit-in that shut down a Board of Regents meeting, a four-day hunger strike (which included one professor, Richa Nagar, who inspired my and others' attempts at bridging militancy and academia), holding classes off-campus, and solidarity pickets at campus loading docks—questions were raised about what it would take to slow down production at the U, and to build workers' power, to such extents that the Administration would be forced to yield to demands.[155] The lack of a broader movement and the unwillingness of ostensibly supportive teachers and students to try more serious tactics—such as a general student strike or refusing to turn in grades or put on classes—gave rise to questions about the obstacles to building cross-university coalitions and solidarity. We considered how students and teachers, with their multiply fragmented lives as working/studying/indebted/professionalizing, etc., develop fragmented subjectivities that can make them partially sympathetic with our protests but also with the forces of the neoliberal status quo. Further, the ineffectiveness of tactics to slow production made us problematize the boundaries of the University, as its resources come from multiple

[155] For analyses of the 2007 AFSCME strike, see Pason 2008; Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009. For a record of the hunger strike, see http://uofmhungerstrike.wordpress.com/ .

channels, including relationships with wider communities.[156]

Our involvement in these successive, overlapping struggles, among others, led us to see connections both between the multiple forms of oppression we were criticizing and between our resistances. Although the restriction of access in the need-blind admissions and General College fights seemed to concern undergrad students more and the suppression of workers' rights in the AFSCME and GradTRAC fights seemed to concern workers more, our participation in many of these struggles allowed us to see commonalities across them. We came to see the University as a terrain fully traversed with intersecting struggles, and that to do anything, or to do nothing, is to make an intervention of some kind in multiple struggles. We saw ourselves as forced to take sides, and claiming to have neutrality would be to take the side of the status quo.[157]

Inspired by EXCO at Macalester, participants in these struggles started a chapter of EXCO at the U of M as a way to continue our struggles and to create a model of the kind of university we desire. We developed critiques of the capitalist educational practices that we experienced with the U of M's Strategic Positioning, which put University actors in competition with each other for artificially scarce rewards and enroll students in the education-based regime of study's 'hidden curriculum' of competition and obedience to authority. Going beyond the simplifying narratives of a 'public university

[156] During his activities in support of the AFSCME strike, Kieran Knutson, a union organizer with the Industrial Workers of the World, argued, "The University is not like a factory where you can shut down the line and the profits instantly stop flowing. The University's resources come from student tuition, corporate and government research contracts, and State funding — none of which are immediately effected by a strike. The University also serves a different function under capitalism than just pumping out profits; its main job is to produce managers and skilled workers for the Establishment as a whole. Therefore a strike needs to threaten class relations widely in order to affect the broad ruling elite that could demand the University settle. This is not an easy task." (Knutson 2007)

[157] Against the claim of being able to take a neutral position from which to theorize these struggles objectively, we reject "all disembodied theory, that pretends to speak from a neutral place of enunciation from where everything can be seen. No, sirs: thought, by necessity, passes through the body, and therefore, thought is always situated, implicated, taking *a side*. The question then is: on *which side* should we position ourselves/are we positioned? Or, in other words: *with whom* do we think?" (Malo de Molina 2006)

under attack by corporate administrators,' we theorized the agents of these capitalist practices as not merely administrators but also, through what we called "participatory management," the participation of actors throughout the university in the labor of managing them and other workers through subjecting each other to forms of measure, discipline, and competition (Kamola and Meyerhoff 2009). During this time, Isaac Kamola (one of my comrades who had participated in all of the above struggles at the U of M) and I engaged in a militant co-research project that theorized this "participatory management" as one key mechanism, among others, for the enclosure of the commons in universities. We saw such commons as being continually created and, then, systematically enclosed throughout the university: in classrooms, departments, research groups, student groups, etc.[158]

Later, I attempted to use that theory for describing the struggles of EXCO: framing the facilitators and participants in EXCO courses as "creating commons" for collectives study, and seeing EXCO organizers' challenges as the need to create better enabling conditions for maintaining those commons and against the enclosure of their commons. However, through experiencing some failures in EXCO organizing, such as in aborted attempts to expand our base with community-led chapters (to be explained below), and from reflecting on those failures in my co-research and in writing this dissertation, I found that the theory of 'commons' and 'enclosure' that I had been using was too simplistic for understanding what was going wrong. Thus, I elaborated on that theory with the concepts of 'conflicting commons,' 'the common,' 'undercommons,' and 'regimes of study.' In the following sections, I will present the results of this elaboration

[158] We engaged in this research in multiple places of collective study: from Bud Duvall's graduate seminar on Critical International Political Economy and his dissertation group to discussions at the hunger strike camp and in an EXCO course on 'Theorizing the University.'

in—what I hope will be—a better analysis of EXCO and its interrelations with the dominant universities.

By contrast with the value practices of the education-based regime of study, EXCO's organizers do not feign to be 'experts' who have a homogenizing capability to determine standards of abstract 'quality' or 'value' for a totalized whole of EXCO. Instead, I argue that the organizers' role should be in creating conditions that enable participants to engage in collective study for developing and expanding their own "value practices" in relation to their communities, movements, and diverse economies, without having to disciplinarily integrate them with any capitalist markets or bureaucracies (De Angelis 2007). EXCO's organizers should affirm its political mission, as expressed with its value practices, because the organizers can find their motivation for passionate engagement in EXCO, seeing it as continuing their struggles—both *within and against* the institutions of the education-based regime of study and *with and for* alternative, anti-oppressive, community-led regimes of study embedded with abolitionist/decolonial movements. Yet, in doing so, EXCO organizers must face tensions between, on the one hand, attempting to communicate representations of its value practices as principles to be adopted amongst its participants and wider communities, and on the other hand, avoiding the ossification of these principles as fixed and immutable, which could enable the formation of an internal hierarchy between participants and organizers, and amongst organizers, about who has more or less knowledge of the 'correct' political line. Also, the latter would limit the ability of EXCO projects to avoid becoming recuperated within constantly changing forms of the dominant institutions, such as through its student groups becoming validated as a form of 'community engagement' for a university or through its

organizers using their experiences with it as a resume building tool for getting jobs within the non-profit or academic industries.

Subscribing to these dual desires—to affirm and pursue political projects while simultaneously avoiding their reification and recuperation—creates multiple tensions in practice for EXCO organizers. Comparing the emergence of the EXCO chapters at Macalester and the U of M, they share a commonality of how the effectiveness of their creation was predicated on intense, affective relationships developed through struggles and study within and against their universities. Such "a/effective relationships" (Shukaitis 2011) are co-constituted with practices of collective study—e.g., the Macalester protesters research (DNBAM 2006), the 'People's Conferences' during the AFSCME strike, discussions in hundreds of EXCO meetings, militant co-research projects, etc.[159] These are crucial enabling conditions for organizers, facilitators, and participants to grapple with EXCO's tensions, because they constitute the bases for validating and reproducing their communities of resistance beyond the representational policing of the dominant institutions. The importance of mutually supportive, affective relationships, intertwined with an alternative regime of study, was reinforced for EXCO organizers through reflecting on our experiences of creating another chapter of EXCO, one that was explicitly embedded in a marginalized community. Through communicative study, participants can articulate, negotiate, and resolve the conflicts that arise between the different value practices of their commons. Such study allows for members of the marginalized communities to engage in undercommons relations, against the further marginalization of their commons and for resistance to the dominant regimes.

[159] For documentation of this collective study, I have an archive of the notes from several hundred EXCO meetings over the five years of my involvement.

Academia Comunitaria

A key value practice for EXCO to foster alternative, community-embedded regimes of study is community resource mapping, which entails identifying, connecting, and developing resources, relationships, desires, and needs in relation to the diverse communities and geographies of the Twin Cities.[160] In practice this means composing maps in relation to some specific subset of resources, for example, people involved in alternative pedagogy across the metropolitan area, community-building in a particular neighborhood, or in another register, spaces that are accessible to community members. EXCO organizers see this mapping as a first step in bringing together communities to deepen the power and impact of EXCO's processes, with the goal of creating an ongoing community-led infrastructure to make real the potential that such mapping articulates, and to ensure that classes are sufficiently relevant to people's lives. One practical implication of combining EXCO's anti-oppression and community resource mapping principles is how organizers guide their outreach efforts with the intention of overcoming intertwined segregations and inequalities—racial, educational, economic, and linguistic—across the Twin Cities.

To realize its vision, EXCO has been working to transform its demographics, which began and grew out of the overlap between college students, recent college graduates, and twenty to thirty year-old, mostly white members of the Twin Cities' progressive and leftist communities. Obstacles that limit EXCO to these demographics include: that EXCO's organizers have generally been embedded in these communities and their webs of affective relationships, their finances are dependent on the university institutions, and their publicity and outreach have been too limited to their own social

[160] For a theory of a related approach, "community asset mapping," see Kretzmann and McKnight 1993.

networks, partly due to lack of organizing capacity for sustained outreach. This ongoing problem was recognized by several organizers, who, from 2007 and on, intentionally built relationships with leaders from communities of people of color, working class, and minority languages. While inspiring and useful in learning how to talk about EXCO in the context of marginalized communities, after two years they still had no realistic strategy for making significant impacts on their demographics or leadership. This changed through the idea and practice of community-led EXCO chapters. The first of these began through relationships built in the Philips Neighborhood of Minneapolis in spring 2009, eventually becoming a community-led chapter called Academia Comunitaria.

After a class on media representations and independent media was intentionally scheduled in Spanish at a primarily Latin@ community center via relationships built with the director of that center and as part of a reoccurring community journalism class, participants in the class approached the director and asked for more. Enthusiastic about this development and in the process of planning to move the bulk of the center's basic needs programming to Saturdays, the director approached EXCO organizers to fill in the rest of the space and time of those Saturdays with EXCO classes, with the hope of attracting more people and expanding the participant demographics by class, race, and language. Very quickly productive tensions emerged in this process on a number of levels. First, while in many ways EXCO offered an outlet for the community center to create the types of programming, including politicized programming, that it otherwise would not have been able to create, the legal restrictions on the space in relation to childcare and food, both of which they wanted to offer, made the organizing much more

expensive and bureaucratic than anyone in the collaboration preferred. Moreover, by starting immediately, they did not develop the base of awareness, relationships, and community involvement—particularly as organizers—from the breadth of the population they were trying to serve. Productively, this meant that the organizers refused to stand in for the community and its desires, but it also resulted in two sets of classes that, while impressive, were not thriving as much as the director hoped.

This was no surprise to EXCO organizers, as they expected a building process based on the participants' self-organizing engagement in free, collective study projects. What resulted, however, was the return of the center's basic needs classes to weekdays and the closing of open Saturdays for education, as well as the withdrawal of the time of the two paid staff organizers at the center. This of course could have been a disaster for the project. What saved it was twofold. First, the community center, like all good nonprofits, had done a far better job documenting participation than the EXCO organizers had been able to do, and as such had compiled the phone numbers of past participants, which EXCO was given when the collaboration ended. Second, a set of innovations emerged from the process: volunteer infrastructure for providing free childcare,[161] doing public presentations at food shelf distribution days, and having a seasonal reflection dinner where past participants, facilitators, and their friends and family, as well as organizers, were invited to come together to talk about what they had to share, what they wanted to learn, and what it takes to make it all happen. The reflection dinner was a concrete and face-to-face way to co-create the type of study projects that people wanted to see, to provide a space to discuss EXCO's vision and mission, to make explicit the

[161] EXCO organizers and others transformed this infrastructure into a Twin Cities Radical Childcare Collective, demonstrating how grassroots-owned infrastructure can be developed horizontally in ways that expand our collective capacities for organizing and struggle.

need for participation across the division of labor, and to build a/effective relationships across those divisions.

As of the spring of 2011, a quarter of EXCO's courses were in Spanish, and these Academia courses were some of the most highly and consistently attended of all EXCO courses. Academia course facilitators live and work within the South Minneapolis Latin@ community that is full of desires for study but has been marginalized from the education-based regime os study's control over access to the resources for study. The facilitators' embeddedness in the already existing informal networks of cooperation and study within their communities enhances their capacities for doing outreach and publicity for connecting with potential course participants, and for building off of their already existing relationships to constitute new communities of dedicated, enthusiastic participants within the courses. The impact of Academia's organizing had created a number of key developments throughout the broader EXCO organization. First, the people involved in organizing the Academia had far more pressures on their already limited time, which pushed EXCO organizers to streamline their citywide structure from monthly business meetings to one business meeting and one visioning meeting per four-month season and monthly meetings of citywide working groups. Second, this model inspired more people to get involved, particularly those who agree with EXCO's vision but have been skeptical about their ability to embody it in the demographics of their participants. Third, organizers began to take the innovations from the Academia and apply them to EXCO as a whole. Fourth, they were working to replicate this model, with concerted efforts in Hamline-Midway, a low-income neighborhood in St. Paul, and in Cedar Riverside, a dense, low income, and primarily East African immigrant

neighborhood located directly next to the U of M campus. This organizing, along with the Academia, provides an inspiration for imagining the expansion of EXCO throughout the Twin Cities and beyond.

Re-organizing for Study in the Undercommons

Despite EXCO organizers' enthusiasm for the community-led chapter model, attempts at its expansion not only failed to materialize but also revealed flaws within the chapter-based organization of EXCO as a whole. In the attempt to start an EXCO chapter in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood, many relationships were built between EXCO organizers and leaders of the East African community there. However, after a series of promising meetings and several attempts to have kick-off events for the new chapter, the project was abandoned as there was an insufficient number of new organizers who lived in the neighborhood and of East African facilitators who could follow through on holding a class in the neighborhood—partly due to the inability of organizers to connect well with the existing networks of cooperation and study in the East African community. During the same time period, another re-organization of EXCO was occurring as the organizers of the U of M chapter (including myself) decided to phase out the use of this university-based chapter and to create a new community-led chapter in South Minneapolis. With the aim of re-structuring EXCO completely around community-led chapters and de-linking ourselves from dependency on the University of Minnesota, we created the South Side Free Skool (SSFS) chapter. The 'Free Skool' part of the name signaled our desire to associate ourselves with the wider North American movement of anarchistic free skools, and to indicate that we saw the 'community' in which our chapter was embedded as the milieu of people who participate in overlapping cultures of anarchists, leftist activists,

punk, hip-hop, 'Do It Yourself,' community gardening, cooperative housing, and bikes in South Minneapolis.[162]

Over the course of a year, our experiences with the new community-embedded chapter organization highlighted a major contradiction that we retained from the previous university-based chapter organization: the university-based chapters (Macalester and U of M, now SSFS) still had control of the vast majority of finances for EXCO as a whole, via their student groups. This imbalance of access to financial power deflated our pretensions to have achieved a horizontalist organization—i.e., one in which any hierarchies would be seen as temporary and troubled, with the aim of enabling all to gain the capacities for leadership. Although the citywide organization included organizers from the Academia Comunitaria in all budgeting decisions, the fact that one or two organizers came as representatives of the entire chapter to those budgeting meetings gave them a concentration of power that was relatively disempowering for other potential organizers of Academia. Thereby, despite the intentions of two organizers who attended most of the citywide meetings to disperse their power more horizontally to new organizers, they were limited in doing so by the structural flaw of EXCO's lingering dependency on university institutions for funding.[163] Thus, when these two organizers' lives became overwhelmed with other responsibilities of family, school, and work, they had to de-prioritize their participation in the volunteer organizing with EXCO. With so much of Academia relying on them and without other organizers to take their place, their stepping back led to the dissolution of Academia in the fall of 2012 (hopefully only temporarily).

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[162] For more information on anarchistic free skools more generally, and for a directory of over fifty of them across North America, see The Free Skools Project website at http://freeskoolsproject.wikispaces.com/ .
[163] On the ideal of the continual "dispersal of power" in horizontalist movements, see Zibechi 2010 and 2012.

Even before the Academia chapter dissolved, the other EXCO chapters also began to realize that they were losing their organizing capacity. With all of the original organizers from Macalester having graduated and moved on, the chapter's organizers lacked firsthand experience with the struggle to expand access at Macalester—the basis of EXCO's origin story—and they felt frustrated with spending much of their energy fruitlessly attempting to recruit new organizers. The SSFS chapter also found itself dwindling in organizing energy, as it made a decision to shift its focus away from growing its organizing base and, instead, to create a working group on popular education, including putting on an EXCO course in Fall 2012 on the history and practice of popular education, which served as preparation for designing a new facilitator training that integrated more radical pedagogical approaches. With the disheartening loss of the Academia chapter—which had been EXCO organizers' main rationale for shifting to community-embedded chapters—and with realizing the increasing obsolescence of the other two chapters, EXCO organizers decided to shift away from the chapter-based model of organization. In attempting to re-structure in a way that would phase out the chapters and shift to a different form of citywide organization, they face a tension between, on the one hand, retaining EXCO's de-centralized structure with organizing relationships rooted in particular community- and place-based networks of cooperation and histories of struggle, and on the other hand, increasing coordination in a way that is more in line with EXCO's principles, particularly for combating power imbalances within and across communities.

Organizers' initial step, in December 2012, was to adopt a new structure that centralizes the citywide organization by eliminating the chapters and instead having more

frequent, bi-monthly meetings of all organizers, for better communication amongst organizers, while also decentralizing in a way that disperses power by putting more emphasis on organizers' participation in the working groups around publicity, facilitator support, and events—planning more frequent meetings of them and also opening up the structure of the organization for creating new working groups, such as around particular types of classes or based in particular neighborhoods. Rather than feeling the need to represent communities in organizing chapters, EXCO has shifted to building on the ways that community members are already representing themselves in their own informal networks of cooperation and study. By centering the working groups, EXCO can attempt to move away from divisions between 'organizers' or 'activists' and the 'facilitators' and 'participants' in courses, and instead to shift to seeing everyone who participates in EXCO in any way as simultaneously a co-worker, co-student, and co-facilitator.[164] Breaking down a strict distinction between 'working groups' and 'courses,' EXCO participants can see all of their meetings as group formations where overlapping practices of work, study, and pedagogy take place.

Despite the absence of waged labor, I recommend that EXCO should be seen as a kind of labor and student union in which participants organize together to improve their collective conditions of work and study. EXCO organizers should take on the challenge of creating conditions for each meeting—whether an organizing meeting, a facilitator workshop, or more indirectly, the facilitators' classes—to become places in which new commons are composed from the convergence of actors who bring their own value

[164] My critique of 'activist' or 'organizer' subjectivities is in line with the call of the essay "Give up activism," which notes how such roles can create mini-bureaucracies within radical movements and can present obstacles to seeing the ways in which the people whom the 'activists' are trying to 'organize' are already engaged in radical kinds of activities, such as the informal networks of cooperation and study discussed here (cf. Andrew X 1999; Thompson 2010).

practices from the commons of their different communities and geographies. Such enabling conditions would entail, generally, the capacities for all participants to engage in collective communication and study—in and through the common—about the differences and commonalities across their place-and-body-particular value practices. Conversely, they should minimize the many limiting conditions on such continual flows of study-teaching-knowledge, particularly from short-circuiting these flows with simplifying narratives that treat the surplus of the participants' collective activities as surplus value rather than surplus common.

Although such recommended shifts could allow for greater flexibility and less concentrations of power, the level of generality at which I am offering them here makes them merely a beginning for more concretely grappling with the tensions around values of rootedness, a/effectivity, continual communicative circulation of study-teaching-knowledge, and dispersing power. Thus, further, more detailed institutional and practical recommendations are needed. In the above section on building a/effective relationships with Academia Comunitaria, I discussed how this gave EXCO organizers a way to grapple with the tensions between their dual desires to promote EXCO's value practices while avoiding their ossification in fixed representations. This approach focuses on a wider organization level but it neglects to address such tensions on the more micro-political level of the courses themselves. A key way that this tension articulates itself within EXCO courses is through the conflicts between the value practices that people desire to have enacted within their courses and the value practices that facilitators and participants bring with them from their habituation through the education-based regime of study and other dominant institutions.

In order to investigate these tensions with an eye toward improving EXCO's facilitator support infrastructure in a way that could give guidance for facilitators to grapple with them, I undertook a militant co-research project with my fellow organizer, Erin Dyke, in our co-facilitation of a course on "Radical Pedagogy." Part of our motivation for engaging in this project was because we saw the importance for EXCO's sustainability of intertwining practices of collective study with relationship building amongst organizers, facilitators, and participants. In contrast and opposition to the education-based regime of study, EXCO's attempt to foster alternative regimes of study requires its participants to avoid appeals to reified 'expertise' that short-circuits the continual circulation of study-teaching-knowledge in and through the common. This challenge requires EXCO organizers to avoid setting themselves up as 'experts' and, instead, to continue engaging in study. The militant co-research projects that I have engaged in with other organizers, David and Erin, are minor, imperfect models for such continual study that should be amplified and expanded to all of the organizers.[165] Some of EXCO's ongoing practices have instituted such study already—e.g., discussion activities at meetings, retreats, and reflection dinners—but organizers should infuse such study more systematically thoroughout all of EXCO's practices. As a taste of this potential, the following section presents an account of Erin's and my co-research, analyzed with an eye toward providing guidance for EXCO as a whole.

[165] A limiting condition on expanding this study has been my own investments in the institutions of the education-based regime of study—e.g., by having to conform the paper that I wrote with David to academic publishing requirements, this limited the extent to which he, as a non-academic, was interested in the project.

Militant Co-research through an EXCO Course[166]

At the same time that my co-researcher, Erin, and I have been EXCO organizers, we have also worked as academics, as graduate students, at the University of Minnesota. Our dual positions have given us critical insights into the politics of higher education. Within the university, we have simultaneously felt the pressures of teaching within classrooms, researching, and building our CVs, while organizing with student-worker coalitions and a graduate student union to transform the oppressive, exploitative characteristics of our institution and of higher education in general—from its direct roles in creating a 'new majority' of precarious, casualized faculty and increasingly indenturing students, with student debt exploding to over $1 trillion in 2012, to its indirect role as the top of the pyramid of an education system that pushes out millions of students, heavily along class and racial lines, into the 'schools-to-prisons' pipeline.

Depending on their situations, different people understand these negative effects differently, and take up varying positions of critique of, and resistance to, their sources. Being simultaneously *within and against* the education-based regime of study, everyone has a kind of 'ambivalent educational self'—ambivalent between taking critical, resistant perspectives on the education regime and seeing one's life and work as bound up with the status quo. We who call ourselves 'critical' or 'radical' educators grapple with the tensions between these impulses. However, when we explore these tensions so deeply that they start to challenge our institutional positions, we tend to pull back and make compromises out of fear of repression, ostracism, or slipping in the academic capitalist

[166] I wrote much of the following section in collaboration with Erin Dyke, my co-researcher, for a paper that will be published in September 2013. For this chapter, I have revised it so as to adapt it into this chapter and the dissertation as a whole, but I have maintained the 1st person plural voice ('we') throughout to indicate that it was mostly co-authored with Erin.

rat race. Against the pressures toward these compromises, our experience with EXCO has provided a bulwark. Since EXCO enacts a miniature version of an alternative vision of what the institutions of education could become, it provides places both for unsubscribing from the sense of necessity of the education-based regime of study and for experimenting with modes of study that grapple with the tensions of being *within*, *against*, and *beyond* that regime.

We focus on the EXCO free school as a place of aspirationally 'radical' pedagogy and study that is simultaneously outside of and interconnected with the institutions of the education-based regime of study. Critical education research can easily pass over subtle modes of thinking and interacting, expectations and dispositions that we acquire through education and that we carry with us into the rest of our lives. In fact, we can find opportunities to study them outside of universities as well, particularly in situations that are called ones of 'education' or 'study,' which call on our bodies' habits and expectations for such spaces to click on. In different conditions from those we find in the 'normal' education institutions, we can *experiment* with our habits and expectations. Particularly, in a space that aspires to be one of 'radical' study—in which there are no grades, tests, credits, wage labor, tuition, bureaucracy—we can experiment with the different possible modes of association between, on the one hand, various aspirationally 'radical' conditions, and on the other hand, the habits and expectations that participants bring into the situation. To make such an experimental lab in which the more obvious limits to radical study are reduced, we created a class on 'Radical Pedagogy' through EXCO. Our research here is based on this class and, more broadly, with EXCO.

Drawing on our experiences and reflections from the class, in this paper we investigate how subtle modes of thinking from so-called 'normal' education infiltrate activities of aspirationally 'radical' situations of pedagogy and study. We theorize our practices of grappling with these tensions as a kind of 'playful work,' centered around four themes: *the geo- and body-political situatedness of knowledge*, *space-time*, *a/effective relationships*, and *pedagogy and study*. Within these themes, we take up and trouble modernist/colonial dichotomies—representations and reality, space and time, society and nature, individual and collective, primitive and civilized, uneducated and educated—which we view as subtle sources of obstacles we experienced in our class and, more broadly, in our free school and other aspirationally 'radical' organizations. Subscribing to these conceptual separations, and coming to take them for granted, both happens through and serves to legitimate the institutions of education, or the processes of making people 'ready' for adulthood, work, and governance.

Militant Co-Research: Within and Against / With and For

Ostensibly 'critical' and 'radical' approaches to education often fall back on the education regime's limited imagined trajectories for students' study; for example, by seeing students as 'individuals' who merely need to increase their 'critical consciousness' or 'self-reflexivity' about the world, while still advancing up the developmental stages of the education system with the ideal end being the university. Because traditional K-12-focused education research and higher education research can be separated so easily, scholars often make it seem as if the university is not, or only incidentally, a part of the reproduction of dominant education in schools (Kliebard, 2004). Both educators' and students' subscriptions to these individualizing modes are enforced by mechanisms of

discipline, exclusion, and marginalization —and they are often reproduced in the solutions offered by critical education scholars.

Freirean notions of critical pedagogy tend to privilege educational situations of study organized by teachers with pedagogical expertise, emphasizing "an ontological vocation of progressive humanization through praxis" (Lewis 2011a, 254). Prakash and Esteva (2008) argue that this delegitimizes the everyday, community-embedded places of study that contribute alternative perspectives to modernity and coloniality. The ways in which critical consciousness often gets mobilized as a progression toward 'humanness' perpetuates the dichotomy and hierarchy of civilized/educated/critical over primitive/uneducated/uncritical. By insisting people need help and empowerment to learn how to live, critical pedagogues position education as the primary means of humanization and liberation (as in McLaren 2010; Freire 1970).

Rather than presuppose that we already know the answer to the question of what 'critical' or 'radical' study should be, that is precisely the question we are exploring through this research. To avoid a simplistic dichotomy of 'radical' vs. 'normal' study, we emphasize how aspirationally 'radical' study spaces can never be fully disconnected from the intersecting systems of domination, exploitation, and oppression that are bound up with the so-called 'normal' education system. At the same time, the term 'within' is relative; the 'normal' institutions of schools and universities tend to be relatively more enmeshed 'within' the education system than are some 'radical' institutions, such as anarchistic free schools. The education system is composed with mechanisms of exclusion and marginalization, such as testing, grading, tracking, tuition, and hierarchies within and across levels. Although everyone is affected by the education system in some

way, some people are more negatively affected by these mechanisms, strongly dependent on class, race, gender, nationality, and other factors. Some are pushed out, marginalized, or excluded, while some rise through the system's ranks and have greater influence and access within it and in the capitalist world of work. For the creation and maintenance of any collectively resistant subjects, it is necessary to build relationships *with* those who are marginalized from the institutions of the education-based regime of study and to organize movements with them *for* changing and/or abolishing those institutions and promoting alternatives.

These questions—how to organize *within and against* the education regime, while organizing *with and for* those who are excluded and marginalized from it—compose the problematic with which we frame our militant co-research project. To explain what we mean by this term, "militant co-research," we will describe each of its components in relation to our context (Malo de Molina 2006). It is 'militant' in the sense that we situate the project as embedded in the history and political purposes of an organization, EXCO, to which we are committed. Although EXCO has become one of the largest anarchistic free schools in the US, it has been a very rocky road and, unfortunately, the past year has seen a down-swing in organizer capacity. As a project of 'research,' our paper aims to offer guidance for EXCO's participants to expand its constituent power—i.e., for enacting critically constructive improvements within EXCO and wider movements. The basis of our research for this paper is an EXCO class on 'Radical Pedagogy' that we co-facilitated in the summer of 2012. Since one of EXCO's organizing challenges has been around equipping facilitators with capacities to make their own classes successful—on their and the participants' terms, and in harmony with EXCO's anti-oppressive, anti-

authoritarian values—one of our goals with this class was to help improve EXCO's facilitator support practices.[167] Not only were we taking on the roles of researchers and organizers in this class but also facilitators and participants, aiming to create a situation in which we and the other participants could improve our skills and knowledge with radical pedagogy.

Before the class, we met several times to plan out seven class meetings, including readings—on pedagogy generally, on political education and radical pedagogy, and then a class each on colonialism, race, and gender and sexuality. About 18 participants came to the first class, and attendance dwindled afterwards, fluctuating between 8 and 12 participants. Most had attended or were attending college or university; they were mostly white, came from various backgrounds and experiences, and less than half were teachers in 'normal' schools or universities. About half were friends of ours through organizing EXCO or other projects, a few were former or current class facilitators, and others heard about the class through the EXCO website or by word of mouth. We encouraged participants to take on their own research projects throughout and beyond the course—becoming co-researchers along with us. We took thorough notes on each class and sent them to the class email list. After each class, we met to reflect on how the class went, both for the purposes of our research and for planning the following class. After the course, we performed follow-up interviews with six participants.

Rather than having a set research agenda as in a traditional methodology, we interpret the '*co*-research' aspect of our approach as an imperative to see our research methods as recursively intertwined in a "messy," endlessly controversial process of

[167] The main practices through which organizers have attempted to address these challenges have been facilitator orientations at the beginning of each semester as well as connecting facilitators with a support person for the semester.

mutual transformation with our theories, values, and "group formations" of our 'selves,' 'communities,' 'relationships,' etc. (Law 2004; Latour 2005). It is co-research not merely in the sense that we are co-planning, co-analyzing, and co-writing with each other, transgressing the normal individualization of research, but also we are collaborating with others in the class and wider movements.

In this collaborative study, we take on the Zapatista principle, 'walking together, we ask questions.' A central one has been: *how can we create situations of radical movement- and community-embedded study?* Considering the dominance of the education-based regime of study, superficially it would seem that the response should be that promoting alternative regimes requires a great deal of work. Yet, considering that within capitalism the idea of 'work' is almost inextricably associated with wage labor, what we mean by 'work' must itself be treated as an object of critique. A key starting point is to consider what activities are opposed to 'work' in dominant discourses and then to trouble those dichotomies. One central dichotomy is between work and play. In dominant modes of understanding education, particularly 'stage developmentalism,' play is often associated with earlier, 'childhood' stages and is opposed with qualities of an individual that are associated with the endpoint of this trajectory: independence, invulnerability, and devotion to and readiness for work (Lesko 2001; Katz 2011). In opposition to developmentalist valorization of an individualized subject, play destabilizes assumed boundaries of 'individuals' through joyful affective relations between people. Thereby, it enables "received meanings and relations [to be] refused or reworked" (Katz 2011, 56). Against framings that trivialize play as childish, unproductive, and a waste of time, in our class we tried to study through playing, including with games, role playing

(or playing 'pretend'), drawing/making art, among other ways in order to "toy with the meanings and practices" of radical pedagogy (56).

Rather than continue to circulate the dichotomy of 'work' and 'play,' we use the ambivalent concepts of 'playful work' and 'work-ful play,' and we investigate in what ways these complex practices could be involved in creating radical study situations. We identify different themes of this playful work—that is, sets of conceptual 'toys' and 'tools'—and in each of these we talk about grappling with various dichotomies, boundaries, dispositions, and expectations that participants bring into the aspirationally 'radical' situation. A key theoretical move in this playful work is to take a decolonial perspective on these dichotomies by recognizing them as "colonial differences" that are part of the assumptions of modernity/coloniality used to de-legitimate alternative modes of living (Mignolo 2011). We highlight the ways in which these assumptions are intertwined with those of education, and we present alternative concepts for describing the phenomena associated with those dichotomies and for composing decolonial, communal futures. In the following analysis, we draw out how the infiltration of these assumptions into our actions limited our collaborative study.

Geo- and Body-Political Situatedness of Knowledge

Normal schools maintain their borders by creating a kind of mini "state effect" (Mitchell, 1999).[168] The zone of legitimate 'education' is demarcated with the territories of the school and classroom, and it is seen as homologous with the areas of the school administrators' and teachers' authority over the community of people in those territories. The legitimation of these territory-authority relations relies on a dualistic view of reality:

[168] See my Introductory Chapter for an elaboration of these mini "state effects" in relation to discourses around the 'crises' of education and the scales of the 'national,' 'local,' and 'global.'

the political being of the school (or university or classroom) is taken as an abstract, unified representation *separate* from the material, socio-economic world (the places of the school and surroundings and the bodies of people in them). The perpetuation of these mini-states depends on modernist, territorial thinking with a "zero point epistemology," which has its historical origin with maps of the territories of European colonialism, indicating the lines of imperial control of international law, from the 16th century and on, in which the observer sees planet Earth 'from above' and with the Atlantic Ocean at its center (Mignolo, 2011, p. 79). This epistemology uses the assumption of the zero point as "always in the present of time and the center of space" to hide its own localness—the particularity of the geo- and body-historical location in which it is made—while simultaneously "assuming to be universal and thus managing the universality to which everyone has to submit" (p. 80). From the site of this zero point, "the epistemic colonial differences and the epistemic imperial differences are mapped out"—from the difference of 'primitive' vs. 'civilized' that was, and still is used, to disqualify the ways of knowing and living of non-Western peoples and to legitimize the colonization of their lands, to the difference of 'educational' vs. 'non-educational' that is used to legitimize the boundaries and norms of schools and universities.

In opposition to this modernist/colonialist epistemology, we take inspiration from the countless peoples who have resisted colonization and affirmed decolonial modes of thinking that dwell in the borders between the colonial differences. Learning from decolonial struggles, we can draw a simple but systematically useful heuristic: *'I am where I think,'* which "is one basic epistemic principle that legitimizes all ways of thinking and de-legitimizes the pretense of a singular particular epistemology, geo-

historical and bio-graphically located, to be universal" (p. 81). From the perspective of colonial subjects, now including migrants in Western Europe and the U.S., the affirmation of 'I am where I think' "implies 'And you too,' addressed to believers in the epistemology of the zero point." Examining the history of EXCO, although its organizers have not used quite these terms to think of the 'decolonial imperative' to attend to the ways in which our knowledge comes from particular geo- and body-political situations, we have enacted this principle in our organizing, particularly through aiming to de-center the University.

After the first year of classes, EXCO organizers noticed that most of the participants and facilitators were class, race, and education privileged, thereby basically reproducing the exclusive demographics of University classes. Realizing that we were not living up to EXCO's mission to make access to resources for study more equitable, organizers embarked on a strategy to build relationships with people who are marginalized from the University, focusing first on the Latin@ immigrant community in South Minneapolis. After holding classes in Spanish at a community center, some class participants created their own EXCO organizing collective, Academia Comunitaria. With hundreds of participants in several dozen classes put on through Academia over three years, they enacted a new decolonial option not only for EXCO but for contemporary anarchistic free schools across North America. Compared to most University classes and the many EXCO classes that were embedded in the modes of knowing and living of white Euro-Americans, the Academia classes (e.g., Zumba, cooking, Latin@ labor politics) were more embedded in the everyday lives and informal networks of cooperation and study in Latin@ immigrant communities. Their classes created space-

times of communicative study in which to strengthen and expand the value practices of their commons. Thereby, in contrast with the territorial and chronological boundedness of education activities ('mini state effect'), Academia's participants had diverse, continual flows of connections, overlappings, and border-crossings between their places of more concentrated study and of everyday life.

Despite our appreciation of the powerful decolonial projects created through Academia, we failed to connect with them well in our planning and carrying out of our class on 'radical pedagogy.' Due to a complex variety of factors, the organizing capacity of Academia had dwindled to such a low point that their community of facilitators became disconnected and no classes in Spanish were put on in the semesters before and during our class. In addition to considering Academia's organizational breakdown as a barrier to participation in our class for Academia facilitators, we also take some responsibility through our role as facilitators in our planning of the class. Although we tried to avoid reproducing elements of the education regime, we unintentionally created its 'mini state effect' to a certain extent, because we created 'borders' in the sense of barriers of language (not offering bilingual translation in Spanish), geography (locating the class in a mostly white, non-Latin@ neighborhood), transportation (not explicitly offering carpools), relationships (neglecting to do outreach with Latin@ networks of cooperation), and epistemology (using some academic jargon in our class description and assigning readings mostly produced by academics, with a few exceptions). Part of the reason for our failing to be more critical of such 'bordering' was our falling back on subscriptions to a modernist/colonialist assumption about 'space' and 'time'—that is, limiting our responsibilities for the space-time of the class merely to setting a place and

time. This limited view relies on an abstraction of ‘space’ and ‘time’ from lived experiences, neglecting the geo- and body-politics of knowledge of both ourselves and our potential participants, especially those who could offer richer decolonial perspectives.

Composing Space-Time

Ideas about space and time are produced from particular embodied, historical, geographic places and for particular purposes. We understand space and time as intertwined, as opposed to a modernist/colonialist view that sees them as distinct and that frames them within a dichotomous view of ‘representations vs. the material world.’ This goes against prescribing to ‘clock time’ as a representation of a linear scale with which a separate material world should be measured, separated from the lived, “cosmological experience of time” (e.g., of the four seasons, time of the harvest), and against the view of space as a homogeneous grid to be laid upon the surface of a material world, a visualization detached from lived experience for management of the bodies and places on that grid (Massey 2005; Mignolo 2011, 159).

Dominant education discourses include these modernist/colonialist orientations to space-time as taken-for-granted representations with which our growth and change as people should be measured and managed. The modernist/colonialist project draws one of its key sources of legitimation from the dichotomy of ‘modernity’ vs. ‘tradition,’ a distinction which is based on the concept of ‘time’ as a line of successive moments—and through this concept differences between different ‘cultures’ in different geographic places are “classified according to their proximity to modernity or to tradition” (Mignolo 2011, 160). Likewise, in the modernist/colonialist institutions of education, these concepts of space and time are deployed in the institutional authorities’ determinations of

how human bodies should be moved, classified, and managed. Discourses with these concepts give an air of non-controversiality to Taylorist ways of moving students from classroom to classroom in lines, the divisions between subjects and disciplines into different classrooms and buildings, students grouped according to age, 'tracking,' the achievement gap 'crisis,' and the stage developmentalist understandings of how people linearly progress toward an ideal 'civilized' subjectivity (Lesko, 2001).

In our EXCO class, with the absence of coercive pressures on participants—of grades, credits, tuition, truancy laws—to travel through space-time to arrive at the class, the conditions of their travel could no longer be taken for granted. The relations of participants' bodies with the places from, through, and to which they travel entail different conditions for *collecting* the participants together into the place of teaching and learning, which is a precondition for having them *compose* situations of collective study (Latour 2005). The space-time of their bodies' travel through the places of the city to and from the class, and how this relates with their motivation to get to the class, should be an object of reflection and planning for facilitators. This reflection should include consideration of the material circulation of participants' subscriptions to their views of 'space-time' in relation to their own desiring, imagining, and planning of activities and goals in their place- and community-embedded lives.

In our EXCO class, we attempted to anticipate participants' conditions getting to and from the class, and the extent to which we did this successfully, can partially be judged by the number of participants that regularly showed up for each class. In order to make the class more accessible, we attempted to be inclusive of participants' different schedules by using an online scheduling tool (Doodle poll) to find a regular class time

that worked best for everyone. We chose a space that was relatively central to where most people were coming from, and accessible by multiple bus routes. To address family-related needs, in our initial communications with participants, we offered childcare, though no one took us up on this offer. Considering that normal, patriarchal schooling normatively frowns upon caregivers bringing their children into classrooms, we are aware that our offer might not have been enough, and that there is more at work in this limitation than merely offering childcare. The tension between caregivers' desires to participate in EXCO classes and the norm that children are not welcome in 'adult' classes is a broader issue that EXCO could address to some extent through better communication that children are welcome and will be well cared for during all classes.[169]

We also adopted practices in order to account for the variability and precariousness of people's lives. To help participants stay connected with the class, we shared print and electronic copies of the readings and detailed notes for each class via a free Wordpress website and an email listserv. We were flexible about people coming late to class, and filled each other in through various pedagogical strategies, such as narrative retellings, when some of us were unable to do the readings for the week. In normal schooling, 'lateness' and 'unpreparedness' are tropes by which the classroom authority shames and disciplines students—a practice we actively tried to avoid.

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[169] Some other accessibility issues came up during the class that we were able to work through, such as a participant needing to move to separate rooms during small group work to be able to concentrate, and others that we are still unsure about how to support, including a participant who had self-identified anxiety issues who did not come back after the first class. Dominant schooling often creates ability differences as sources of shame for students, individualizing and marginalizing them as not 'normal,' decontextualizing difference and situating it within a binary of less able/more able. Building relationships before we gather for class, such as through more personal communication rather than mass emails, might make participants feel more comfortable sharing needs that, if collectively met, would better ensure their ability to fully participate.

A/effective Relationships

By attending to the space-time-place-body conditions of participants' daily lives and travels, we addressed some of the broader issues that can limit the ability or motivation for people to come to class. Just because participants are collected in the same room together, however, does not mean that they are fully present or feel motivated to bring into the classroom discussion their own narratives about different parts of their lives. In order to create a sense of collective investment in composing the class, we attempted to use 'work-ful play' to foster affective, loving, friendly, supportive relationships. The positive ***a***ffectiveness of these relationships constitutes collective subjectivities for ***e***ffectively radical pedagogy (Shukaitis 2011). The creation of such relationships is not only a necessary enabling condition for enacting the desired content of study in the class but also—with a kind of figure-ground perspective shift—they can become the most important aspect of the class, seeing them as the webs of lived connections that continue on beyond the class. The discourse of the education system circulates modernist/colonialist dichotomies of 'nature' vs. 'society' that de-legitimate the such relationships for their 'wild' unsettling of the boundaries of 'individuals.' Thus, we drop these dichotomies in favor of an alternative way of describing these relationships, seeing them as "movements of association" that compose shifting, lived connections of desiring and "imagining machines" (Latour 2005; Shukaitis 2009b).

In the 'mini states' of schools and universities, the relationships of teachers, administrators, and students remain crystallized in factory-like perpetual motion regardless of what happens in classes. By contrast, in EXCO and other anarchistic free schools the development of relationships through collective study in classes is a crucial

process for maintaining and expanding their infrastructure. Whether and how such relationships form determines if participants continue taking other courses or facilitate their own courses—as many of the members of our class have done in the following semester, including in a Popular Education class—or they could even become EXCO organizers, as happened with one member of our class. In all these ways, the relationships formed through classes are constitutive not only of the sustainability of EXCO but also—as a decolonial alternative to the education regime's centralizing of power—they enable a continual "dispersing of power," with EXCO's visioning, planning, and organizing as an always-in-process, directly democratic project (Zibechi, 2010).

In recognizing the mutual implication of such *a/e*ffective relationships with movement- and community-embedded study, we see that different modes of thinking and interacting can either limit or enable these relationships. Some of the biggest obstacles are from participants subscribing to the individualizing perspectives that they carry from the education regime and its interrelations with the regimes of waged work, consumerism, majoritarian politics, patriarchy, and heteronormativity. As a counter-force, we take a decolonial perspective on the modernist 'society'/'nature' dichotomy and the connected view of 'society' as made up of distinct 'individuals.' We see 'individuals' not in contrast with 'social groups' but as themselves a kind of "group formation," with potentially unlimited controversies about its description—e.g., whether to call it an 'individual self' or an 'assemblage of organs, neurons, desires, water, bacteria, etc.' (Latour, 2005). These controversies over group formations are (un)settled in particular ways through movements of association, such as through the disciplinary practices of schools that enforce subscriptions to 'individualizing' frames of the valued imaginal

trajectory of becoming a ‘graduate’ in opposition to becoming a ‘dropout’ (Fine, 1991). Using this non-modernist language, we remind ourselves that our bodies are always already caught up in movements of association with other bodies and the places we inhabit, and that individualizing subject forms merely short-circuit our movements in order to recuperate the common products of our collectivities for boring life trajectories. Thus, in our classes, to try to de-stabilize participants’ subscriptions to such subject forms, we take their relationships with others—both outside and inside the class—as the preconditions, means, and ends for our pedagogy. One way we tried this was through discussions, activities, and projects that draw on class participants’ relationships with people and projects from outside of the class; e.g., brainstorming about what practical issues they cared about in their lives and, then, about what research projects could be useful for strengthening their capacities to engage better with those issues.

What constitutes a ‘negative’ or a ‘positive’ aspect of a relationship is open to multiple interpretations. Starting with participants’ own evaluations of relationships, activities must also be planned in the class to grapple with differences across participants’ understandings. Some of the key ethical-political tensions around relationships come from controversies regarding constructions of identity—such as class, race, sexuality, gender, age, ability, etc.—that can be subscribed to in ways that create borders and friction between people and/or lines of solidarity across them.

One crucial way that this came up was with race. Ideally, we would have shaped the activities in ways that would enable participants to grapple with the tensions involved in combatting racism in both its explicit and implicit, ‘colorblind’ forms—the racialization of bodies and the institutional, structural effects of white supremacy as well

as the cultures and movements that have re-appropriated representations of race, such as around Blackness and Indigeneity, as markers for solidarity and resistance. Despite our attempting to avoid 'colorblind' racism in the facilitation of the EXCO class through our reading and discussing critical articles about race and colonialism, we fell into this problem in some ways. Related with EXCO's broader organizational problem of being stuck in mostly white activist and academic networks, the initial attendance of our class included only three people of color out of eighteen participants. Two of these three did not return for further classes, which might not have had anything to do with issues of race, but based on our follow-up interview with the one person of color who followed through with all of the classes, the fact that the class was overwhelmingly majority white certainly created barriers to their participation. She said:

> I feel like I had a harder time connecting to other people in the class (not because I didn't like them or anything) but because a lot of my engagements with radical pedagogy have to do with being a brown woman in front of a class of mostly white students and having to negotiate discussions of race and white privilege and other such issues while being the only non-white body in the room. This, unfortunately, is the case in many circumstances, including this radical pedagogy class - while I am sure people would have been open to talking about such issues, I myself was not comfortable with it in these circumstances.

As she suggested, we failed to structure and promote the class in a way that would have made it more appealing to people of color and allowed us to enter into such discussions for collectively problematizing the complex tensions around racism, while avoiding individualizing approaches that make white people feel guilty and that make people of color feel spotlighted or pressured to teach white people about race. For the person of color who continued with our class, one reason she kept coming back was that she already had strong relationships with the facilitators and some of the participants. Thus,

rather than relying on a disembodied approach to discussing race based on readings, we should make sure to ground our discussions in embodied experiences and to pay attention to the possibilities and limits for building on existing relationships.

Pedagogy and Study

On the normal assumptions of education, historically constructed in tandem with the rise of the capitalist, colonial state, there is a tendency to accept the monopolization of the legitimate means for teaching and learning by professionalized teachers and administrators (Prakash & Esteva, 2008). This claimed authority is legitimated through the discourses of modernity/coloniality; e.g., in the contemporary 'developmental stages' frame of education, one's being 'uneducated' on a linear understanding of 'time' is equated with being "behind in time," and "if you believe so, you are more likely to want to catch up with modernity" (Mignolo, 2011, p. 161 & 172). Also, the figure of the 'dropout' stands for the 'wild,' 'primitive' Other to the 'graduate' of the education system's 'civilizing,' 'socializing' process. These discourses reinforce the assumptions that guide particular ways of figuring authority relations and value-making practices in the classroom—fixed hierarchical relations between teachers and students and the 'banking model' with its borders between legitimate and illegitimate forms of knowledge and study. These relations legitimate the professional teachers' authoritarian control of the value practices of grades and credits that plug the common products of collective study into capitalist circuits of value. By contrast, the anti-authoritarian principles of EXCO and other free schools present facilitators with the *challenge* of creating the best conditions for enabling all participants to navigate a messy, always-in-process, horizontalist mode of grappling with their different relationships and value practices. For

helping facilitators approach this complex, context-relative challenge, we offer some tips on limiting conditions along with some tactics for approaching them.

One of the most subtle ways that dispositions acquired from the education system infiltrated our EXCO class was through the language that we used to frame the class and our activities in it. Both facilitators and participants continually used the modernist language of 'education' while often trying to introduce distinctions between what happens in 'normal' education and the kind of activity we wanted to happen in EXCO classes by qualifying 'education' with adjectives of 'critical,' 'radical,' 'popular,' or 'anarchist.' Another rhetorical tactic we tried was to substitute 'teaching and learning' for 'education,' but then we had to qualify this phrase with similar adjectives or by saying 'where everyone is a teacher and a learner.' During our class, we neglected to seriously trouble what can constitute a study situation by using these terms without specifying our meanings of them. Thus, we tended to fall back on and privilege 'normal' and formal organizations of study (i.e., classrooms - whether in EXCO or 'normal' schools). This had the effect of delegitimizing participants' motivations and goals for studying pedagogy in everyday interactions and relationships and for situations not traditionally deemed 'educational' (e.g., two participants who worked with people with disabilities in group care situations). One of these participants said during an interview: "The content was in a different direction, so it kind of felt like what I wanted to work on wasn't a hugely productive conversation for most people's goals for being there [...] Most everyone who was there was either working in education or wanted to, whether it was higher education or working with youth, in that way, that's a very focused conversation." In fact, many participants were in the class to study pedagogy for political organizing,

everyday relationships, among other situations that were not ‘normal education’ situations.

Reflecting on this problem of reinscribing borders around legitimate ‘education,’ we now have a recommendation for how to address this through more conceptual specificity: keep the terms ‘education’ and ‘teaching and learning’ for describing the activities in ‘normal’ schools and universities, but additionally use the term *‘study’* for describing parts of these activities as well as for activities outside of those institutions, whether in alternative kinds of schools such as EXCO or in the course of everyday life. We are using the term ‘study’ not in exclusive distinction from ‘education’ and ‘teaching and learning,’ but rather we see the latter as including activities of study in addition to some other elements, particularly the modernist assumptions of ‘individuals’ who, as students, at the completion of their study can be tested with ‘exams’ administered by ‘individual’ teachers who possess ‘expertise’ and who can commodify their expert knowledge for sale in textbooks and curricula. By recognizing the historical construction of this figuration of study within modernist/colonial ‘education’ and ‘teaching and learning,’ we can open possibilities for figurations of ‘study’ that are de-linked from modernity/coloniality and connected instead with decolonial, communal futures.

For a generic view of study, we draw on Fred Moten and Stefano Harney’s notion of study as “not being ready for governance” (Moten & Harney 2009, 160). They describe ‘study’ as a “relational term,” in complementary relations of “a kind of circle of knowledge—teaching—study, as that set of relations that never really leaves prematurity,” and also in relations of opposition to both ‘exam’ and ‘expertise,’ which imply the completion of study, as well as in opposition to ‘governance’ as “a kind of

prospecting of mass intellectuality" (170-1). This relationality leaves the threads of many controversies open, thereby calling for asking many questions, such as: 'why study?'; 'study for composing what kind of world?'; and 'what are the geo- and body-politically situated relations of the knowledges with which one studies?' Such investigation could include the limiting and enabling conditions of study for composing a modernist/colonialist world if situated in the disciplinary practices of the education-based *regime of study*—or the conditions of an alternative regime of study for decolonial, abolitionist movements and for creating alternative, communal worlds.[170]

This line of inquiry resonates with Moten and Harney's "undercommons" approach, which asks questions about "what one's relationship ought to be to a place [the University] which is, on the one hand, a refuge for study, but on the other, an institution that exerts a quite vicious and brutal—however much it is comfortable and gentle—control over study," and questions about how one can "escape *within* that institution," to take up a kind of "refugee status within the University" in "surreptitious underground zones," grappling with questions of selective in/visibility and im/perceptibility through relations of "criminality" and "maroon community" (Moten & Harney 2009, 166). Addressing questions about study *within and against* dominant institutions and *with and for* marginal communities and radical movements makes questions around pedagogy even more important. Against developmentalist approaches to study, "how can we begin to imagine a pedagogy that is not predicated on the readiness for governance of the student?" (169). De-linking 'pedagogy' from 'education' and associating it with 'study' more generally, we define 'pedagogy' as reflection, planning, and design of situations for study in association with teaching and knowledge production. In our EXCO class, all

[170] For an explanation of my concept of "regimes of study," see Chapter 1.

participants engaged in both pedagogy and study to varying extents, with those of us who took on the role of 'facilitator' having more responsibility for pedagogy in relation to the class.

This more explicit pedagogical responsibility for facilitators, however, should be an object of collective and continuous reflection in order to avoid slipping into positions of authority inherited from teacher-student relations in the education-based regime of study. As an attempt at this reflection, we collectively created expectations for each other and the class during our first meeting. We later recognized that this activity only scratched the surface of the potential for constituting our class as a horizontally self-organizing study collectivity. By imposing our initial curriculum, we accidentally made barriers to connecting the study in our class with the ongoing study in our participants' lives—neglecting to explore controversies over curriculum *with* the participants, drawing on their knowledge, desires, and imaginations.

Only once, during a later session, we collectively re-evaluated our class's expectations, our (the facilitators') pedagogy, and the curriculum, and we realized that we had been neglecting many controversies. Some participants said they were not being challenged or pulled out of their comfort zones enough, and others had hoped for more activities to create and practice radical pedagogy strategies. In an interview after the class was over, a participant expressed dissatisfaction with the ways in which we tended to situate academic readings as the objects of our analysis. She commented: "I was actually a little surprised by how similar many of the conversations were in the two ['normal' and 'radical'] contexts. I guess I suspected that because there would be fewer professional academics in the EXCO class, conversations wouldn't be so mired in theory." In focusing

our study of pedagogy on mostly academic readings and spending less time sharing the playful work of pedagogy with participants through continuous re-evaluation of the curriculum's relevancy to our everyday lives, we often fell back into dichotomies that separated theory from our situated knowledges.

By facilitating the class in this way, we tended to assume we should be able to read and discuss theories of pedagogy, and then later, apply the theories we learned to various future study situations. Instead of masking our own localness, we should have attended more to the geo- and body political situatedness of our past, current, and future study situations. By more explicitly positioning our class, relationships, and lived experiences as the focus of our study on pedagogy, we could have better grappled with the tensions that only appeared as such upon post-class reflection. Doing so, we might have found more effective ways to interrogate and transform the borders we inadvertently created and/or subtly perpetuated through language (English-only), geography and transportation, academic and activist jargon, and constructions of identity through race, class, sexuality, nationality, etc.

The work-ful play and playful work necessary for attending to the precariousness and variability of people's lives within capitalism, building a/effective relationships, and collectively composing a curriculum with movement- and community-embedded pedagogy and study is a complex and controversy-ridden process. The controversies arising from our desires for aspirationally 'radical' pedagogy and study—in conflict with infiltrations of the education-based regime of study—should not be prematurely settled in classes or in the wider EXCO organization. By taking up the challenge to engage with these controversies, we can increase our capacities to work with and for those of us who

are most marginalized and excluded by the education regime, and who are already enacting decolonial options for pedagogy and study in our everyday lives.

An Infrastructure of Capacity-building for Facilitators of Non-and-Anti-Educational Regimes of Study

In my militant co-research project with Bruce Braun and Elizabeth Johnson, we developed a theory of the parasitic relationship that capitalist time has on "cairological time"—or "the time of the common"—in universities (Meyerhoff et al 2012). In our paper, we used EXCO as an example of an alternative institution in which "cairological time" could be relatively more expansively realized and less subsumed into the homogenizing time of capital. We argued:

> What is most striking about EXCO is how it uses the resources of the university but escapes its metrics, not merely 'interrupting' the temporalities of the university, as Agamben would have it, but also using the university as a host, so as to build and add to the 'collective potentiality' of the common. EXCO's class participants create new associations around educational commons and connect them with other commons throughout the city, such as food commons with community gardening and Food Not Bombs classes or media commons with Indymedia workshops, thereby enabling the "circulation of the common" (de Peuter and Dyer-Witherford, 2010). Equally as important, EXCO allows for the pleasures of collective work, and the construction of new subjectivities around these pleasures. (Meyerhoff et al 2012, 503)

Our co-research project was immeasurably influential for my writing in this dissertation, and through writing it, I have elaborated further upon the theory from that project. In expanding our conceptual framework—particularly with the concepts of 'conflicting commons,' 'undercommons,' and 'regimes of study'—I have attempted to make the theory more felicitously resonant with the full complexity of our practical problematics. Now, after fleshing out the problematic of 'within and against' / 'with and for' in relation

to both EXCO and dominant universities, I conclude this chapter with an admittedly abstract summary of how I recommend articulating this new conceptual framework in relation to this problematic. Then, in the Conclusion Chapter, I interpret these theoretical guidelines more concretely, in the form of proposals.

For those who desire worlds alternative to the capitalist, modernist, colonialist, white supremacist, hetero-patriarchal one, the key challenge is to create and foster regimes of study that not only are alternative to the regime that is dominant in this world—the education-based one—but also are antagonistic and abolitionist toward to it. Otherwise, the reproduction of the forms of subjectivity, power, and knowledge that are bound up with the education regime will continue, and they will relentlessly re-appear in any forms of institutions that are supposed to be alternative to and critical of the dominant world—from anti-capitalist unions and solidarity economies to anti-racist, queer, feminist non-profits and anarchist free skools. Considering EXCO as a project that emerged from a struggle critical of Macalester College, an institution of the education-based regime of study (seen through the lens of my retrospective interpretation here of how they should have narrated their object of critique), they—and other resistant collective study projects—should articulate their missions as a continuation of that critique of the institutions and with the aim of displacing them through fostering non-and-anti-educational regimes of study. I wager that my new conceptual framework gives better guidance for taking on this challenge.

The principal actors in situations of study across these different institutions tend to be known as ‘teachers’ in K-12 schools, ‘professors’ or ‘instructors’ in higher education, and ‘facilitators’ (or some variant) in EXCO and other free skools, though the

distinction between ‘facilitators’ and ‘participants’ should be seen as blurry and relative (e.g., in courses such as a reading group each of the participants might take on equal facilitation responsibilities). All of these actors engage in facilitation of study of some kind, but the kind of study they facilitate is relatively more or less embedded in the education-based regime and/or in alternatives to it, due to the particular conditions of the institutions in which they teach. The teachers and professors in dominant schools and universities are relatively far more embedded in the education regime, while facilitators in EXCO are relatively less so. Yet, the latter are still intertwined with that regime—as I demonstrated in this Chapter—to the extent that facilitators and participants infiltrate their course’s space-times with dispositions habituated from that regime. Conversely, alternative regimes of study are enacted, in marginal and continually recuperated ways, in the education-dominated institutions. Therefore, for EXCO and other counter-hegemonic study institutions, perhaps their most crucial project of self-improvement should be focused on their infrastructure for supporting facilitators—and for fostering mutual aid relationships between them—for increasing their capacities to compose non-and-anti-educational regimes of study in their classes, and to militate against the education regime, whether its overt disciplinary practices of expertise and exams or the subtle infiltrations of embodied dispositions. Further, they should widen this infrastructure of support to include not only those who teach within their institutions but also those facilitators of study in the education-dominated institutions, so they can carry out this counter-hegemonic project ‘from within.’

For more concretely designing practices and institutions that could enact features of this infrastructure—such as in facilitator orientations, pedagogy workshops, and

discussions about facilitation in organizing meetings—I lay out here a relatively abstract set of heuristics and guiding questions. This infrastructure should include practices for facilitators (as participants) to engage in continual study-teaching-knowledge that enables them to develop capacities for making the following set of distinctions, interpretations, and evaluations in their design and implementation of their course curricula.[171]

First, facilitators should be able to articulate their ideal vision for the relations and conditions of study-teaching-knowledge in their courses. This could include addressing questions such as: What are the value practices that I (or we) as facilitator(s) bring to the course, and what value practices do the participants bring to the course? In what ways are these value practices grounded— in relation to bodies and places—in particular communities with particular commons? In what ways can we anticipate commonalities, differences, and conflicts between these value practices? For addressing such questions, the facilitator should also gain capacities, and have collective support, to perform the appropriate research prior to the beginning of the course (e.g., surveys and interviews with the potential participants who have registered for the course).

Second, after studying these background considerations, the facilitator should be able to deploy the results of their preliminary research as a guide for designing and implementing their course's curriculum in a way that maximizes its enactment of a non-and-anti-educational regime of study. This could include raising and responding to questions such as: In what ways can we create course activities in which participants will have opportunities to share their different motivations for joining the course, to relate these motivations to their value practices, and to address commonalities, differences, and

[171] On the complex, controversy-ridden relations between the ideals and reality, and the means and ends, of curricular design and implementation, see McCowan 2009.

potential conflicts across their motivations? What activities could facilitate the participants' building of trusting, positively affective relationships with each other, whether starting from existing relationships or not? What kinds of activities and discussions will enable the participants to engage productively with the conflicts across their value practices—towards allowing them to respect each other's differences and building commonalities across them, such that they can engage in continual, collective study-teaching-knowledge without having the conflicts force them to break out of its continuity (e.g., by disengaging from or leaving the course)? Considering this kind of continual process as an ideal for the course, what activities for determining place-and-body related conditions (e.g., the time and location of the course, the configuration of the room, childcare, translation, etc) could facilitate the continuity of this process? I.e., how can the participants experience the space-time of the course in a "cairological" way, which is an experience of pleasure that is fulfilling in the moment, thereby fostering participants' desires to affirm that experience as one they would like to continue, and thus, to reinvest any surplus of the activities of the course (e.g., affective relationships, capacities, and knowledge that participants have constructed) back into the common projects of the course, as surplus common, rather than to have that surplus appropriated for individualizing projects, as surplus value, that break away from the course?

Third, considering how the latter question raises the continually threat of limiting conditions on the potentials for the course participants to engage in spirally expanding common projects of teaching-study-knowledge, the facilitators should gain capacities for anticipating and militating against those limiting conditions. These entail capacities to dwell and struggle in the *undercommons* of alternative regimes of study: engaging in

cairological experiences of continuous study while evading and subverting its short-circuiting via homogenizing practices of valuing and wasting. Such capacities include frames for engaging questions in curriculum design and implementation such as: To what extent do institutional conditions (especially for those working in education institutions) enforce, onto the facilitator, the duty to impose of practices of the education-based regime of study—e.g., exams, grades, and expert authority relations? To what extent can the facilitator develop activities that undercut or evade those forces (e.g., collaborative grading, collectively designed activities, valuing the 'expertise' of all participants, etc)? Beyond considering these more obvious education practices, in what ways can the facilitator anticipate the infiltration of more subtle dispositions acquired from the education-based regime of study and associated regimes that the participants (and the facilitator(s)) might carry with them into the course (e.g., expert-worshipping attitudes, desires for exams and grades, academic jargon, racism, sexism, commodifying views of knowledge, etc)? How could they design activities in the course that would allow participants to identify such dispositions, and to engage in critical discussions about them that would destabilize and counteract their effects? In composing course activities, what sorts of narratives and ways of seeing the world would they want to critique for their effects of supporting such subtle dispositions of the education regime? I.e., what kinds of discourses imply certain attributions of 'value' and 'waste' that short-circuit participants' continual process of study-teaching-knowledge about the differences and commonalities across their value practices? E.g., what narratives would portray such activities as a 'waste of time,' based on a homogenized conception of 'time,' segmented into past, present, and future, and abstracted from space? Conversely, what narratives with an

abstract conception of ‘space’ would portray participants’ place-and-body-grounded value practices as unworthy of consideration on their own terms (e.g., with discourses that criminalize and racialize places and bodies)?

Through grappling with such questions, ideally in conversation with their fellow facilitators and course participants, facilitators can gain capacities for practicing a kind of non-and-anti-educational calisthenics of critical praxis in relation to these abstractly homogenizing discourses of ‘waste’ and ‘value.’ Militating against how such discourses figure the surplus of their common study-teaching-knowledge projects as either surplus value or waste, instead facilitators and participants can affirm their pleasurable, cairological, collective experiences, desiring them to be continued in the world they are composing together. In the Concluding Chapter, I more concretely articulate this theory in the form of strategic propositions for movements with relations of ‘within and against’ / ‘with and for’ to regimes of study.

Conclusion

Infrastructures for an Alter-University Movement: The Undercommons of Contingent Faculty and Free Universities

Cycling back to the spur from my Introductory Chapter, against simplifying narratives about the 'crises' of higher education, I have devoted many words in this dissertation to engaging the more complex problematic of 'within and against' / 'with and for.' In Chapters 1 through 4, I drew on historical and contemporary movements that have engaged with this problematic. Especially in Chapter 2, I developed a theory that, I argue, is better suited for articulating guidance in relation to this problematic for particular situations, in ways that can continually militate against falling back on simplifying narratives that short-circuit engagement with its complexities. As the beginning of a test of whether my theory achieves such 'better suitedness,' I applied its frames through my own militant research and participation in contemporary movements around regimes of study, one of which, the movement of free skools and autonomous universities, I made the subject of Chapter 4 with EXCO. Although I found this theory useful for clarifying my own understanding of EXCO's engagement in 'within and against' / 'with and for' struggles, whether the theory-guided analysis that I wrote in that chapter turns out to be useful for other EXCO practitioners is an open question. To increase the likelihood of that possibility, in this Conclusion I elaborate that analysis in the form of more concrete propositions, articulated with an eye towards their clarity and appeal for my intended audience who I see—taking inspiration from the alter-globalization movement—as potential participants in a 'movement of movements' around regimes of study that I call 'the alter-university movement.' Taking relays from

the historical movements that I discussed in the earlier Chapters, and seeking to strengthen the theories used by more contemporary movements in Chapters 3 and 4, I offer guidance here for engagement in struggles around regimes of study. In making a call for an 'alter-university movement,' I argue that nascent elements of such a movement already exist but I theorize better ways to interconnect them. Differentiating this 'alter-university movement' from neoliberal possibilities as one that promotes regimes of study alternative to the education-based one, I propose that the infrastructure for such a movement should be created by free universities. In response to counter-arguments from critics and others who might conflate such free universities with forces of the casualization and de-professionalization of faculty labor in the US, I recommend a way for practitioners of free universities to see contingent faculty as potential co-participants-in-struggle with whom to build relationships as part of a broader alter-university movement.

To broaden this movement further, I argue that contingent faculty can build their nascent movement by taking inspiration from many historical and contemporary movements that have struggled against their marginalization—their 'wasting'—from institutions of education. Rather than presupposing a subject for this movement, the new subjectivities of the movement compose themselves through practices of collective study in and for the movement. Within and against their being positioned as the 'waste' of the education-based regime of study, they can see themselves as part of a broader movement of the 'alter-university movement,' as the converse side of their organizing with each other through and for their value practices in alternative regimes of study.

To conclude, I first highlight the potential synergy between free universities and the nascent movement of contingent academics. By detaching from the feeling of necessity of submitting to the academic rat race and unsettling their subscription to an ideal of 'security' through tenure, contingent academics could use free universities' infrastructures for fulfilling their desires to study while building relationships with each other and others for organizing to improve their working, living, and studying conditions within these institutions and to create resistant alternatives. In order to make free universities into such a thriving infrastructure for an 'alter-university movement,' their organizers must re-work their institutions in ways that enable continual study of their projects' constitutive tensions. To analyze obstacles to this re-working, I critique the romanticization of 'community,' 'commons,' and 'education.' Deploying my theory of conflicting commons, undercommons, and the common, I conclude with strategies that offer more nuanced guidance for organizers of free universities to compose better infrastructures for courses in which facilitators and participants can grapple with the unlimited controversies of their intersecting lives, places, communities, and movements.

Toward an Alter-University Movement with Contingent Faculty

A key preliminary issue that must be addressed, however, is that of differentiating the particular political project of this 'alter-university movement' from other possible forms of it. I take inspiration here from how the 'anti-and-alter-globalization' movement have distinguished the horizontalist, anti-capitalist form of globalization that they promote from the neoliberal, neoconservative, state-capitalist forms of globalization—e.g., as theorized with 'Multitude' in opposition to 'Empire,' respectively (Hardt and

Negri 2000; 2004). Aiming to complement that movement with a better theorization of how it should relate with struggles around regimes of study, I articulate my project of an 'alter-university movement' as one that is in opposition to neoliberal, neoconservative, state-capitalist forms of universities and that is for propositions of decolonial, abolitionist, feminist, queer, anti-capitalist forms of universities.[172] The key difference is that the former retains the education-based regime of study while the latter rejects it in favor of alternative regimes. The importance of making such differentiations has become very clear to me in considering counter-arguments against anarchistic free schools or autonomous universities like EXCO, especially from critics who lump them together with 'free schools' in England, MOOCs, and forces of the casualization of faculty labor in the US. Using the frames of my new theory to respond to these counter-arguments here allows me to demonstrate the usefulness of this theory as a guide for the 'alter-university movement.'

In England, 'free schools' refers to something very similar to 'charter schools' in the US and Canada. All of them interpret 'free' in the sense of autonomy from the state, particularly from local educational authorities, in how they design their curriculum, while still relying on the state for taxpayer funding. Through their governance by a non-profit charitable trust, groups of parents, teachers, businesses, charities, and religious entities can have control over the management of the school. The Conservative Party has pushed similar schemes for many years, but in 2010 they were enacted in law through the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition, and as of July 2013 almost 300 of such

[172] I list "neoliberalism" and "neoconservatism" together here because although they can be at odds and separate from each other, they often have complicities and overlappings with each other. On the convergences between neoliberalism and neoconservatism in their opposition to social democracy, see Brown 2006.

schools had opened or been approved to open.[173] Despite the obvious potential for confusion of names, practitioners of anarchist free schools in the US have done very little, if anything, to differentiate their projects from England's neoliberal, neoconservative free schools—perhaps because they tend to be focused on their local communities and, hence, worry little about their projects becoming confused with a transnational comparison. Yet, considering EXCO as a type of free school project that constituted itself through engagement with struggles against institutions of the dominant, education-based regime of study, the transnational character of the latter regime gives EXCO that wider geographic scale of concern as well. Thus, I use my new theory to prescribe recommendations for how EXCO and other anarchistic free schools can enact more expansively subversive potentials.

First, they should differentiate the regimes of study that they promote from the education-based regime that they oppose, and they should give concrete examples of how such contrasts play out, such as by the way in which England's neoliberal free schools participate in the education-regime through their use of exams, grades, grade levels, expertise-dispensing teachers, and their embeddedness within the broader hierarchy of education institutions. Second, related to the latter contrast, instead of calling themselves 'schools' or 'community education,' I recommend that these infrastructures for alternative study projects use 'college' or, even better, 'university,' in their names, so as to present themselves as a direct challenge to the institutions at the top of the hierarchical structure of the education-based regime. By making a 'university' that is explicitly for people of all ages to engage in study and that is open to anyone, they can offer a stark

[173] On free schools in England, see Angela Harrison, "What Will Make a School 'Free'?" *BBC News*, 2010 - http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10138787 ; and the Wikipedia entry on 'Free school (England)': http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_school_%28England%29

contrast with the universities of the education-based regime that require 'graduation' credentials from a 'lower' level of that regime's institutions, which is associated with various other competitive, hierarchizing, and disciplinary mechanisms.

In the US, at the level of 'higher education,' the most clear challenge and confusion with free and autonomous universities is from MOOCs, which have a family resemblance through their offering of free access to resources for study. Yet, as with England's free schools, free universities can differentiate themselves from MOOCs on the basis of the regimes of study that they enact. A key prior distinction that must be made is between the general technology of MOOCs—Massively Open Online Courseware—and the particular ways that this technology is implemented. Diverging from the initial, more experimental uses of this technology (Bady 2013), the ways MOOCs have been used by all of the major 'MOOC corporations,' whether for-profit or non-profit, have been thoroughly embedded in the education regime. This is seen in their reliance on the transmission of expertise from professors who work in established universities of the education regime, and who give the students exams to test their learning of that expert knowledge, and in how the technology is funded and controlled by those universities and corporations that also have structural imperatives to reproduce that regime. Yet, the technology of MOOCs could be reclaimed and used for purposes of alternative regimes of study. Such alternative potentials could be realized if free universities were to develop sufficient technical know-how and financial resources to design and implement computer programs and web platforms for controlling their own MOOCs in accord with their value practices.[174]

[174] One example of such a potential use of MOOCs for alternative regimes of study is an 'imaginal machine' that I discussed with Jesse Goldstein: if people at different free, autonomous universities across

Considering these potential convergences between MOOC technology and free, autonomous universities, another major counter-argument to both of them heightens the need to differentiate their forms in relation to regimes of study: the objection that they de-professionalize the professoriate. These fears of de-professionalization are especially exacerbated with the rise of the casualization of labor across the education industry, as seen starkly with contingent faculty becoming the majority of teachers in higher education in the past decade. Compared to tenure-stream faculty, within the institutions of the education-based regime of study, contingent faculty tend to enjoy much lower valuations of the products of their having passed through the process of professionalization—i.e., their developing capacities for teaching and research through study in educational institutions—lower valuation as seen in the form of lower financial compensation, less job security and benefits, and worse working conditions. Accordingly, contingent faculty, at least those few who have the energy and motivation to organize for change, have tended to push for greater recognition and valuation of their professional qualities (e.g., along with the arguments of AAUP president, Cary Nelson, to strengthen and expand the institutions of academic freedom and shared governance that could supposedly increase such recognition (Nelson 2010)). On their view, at least as seen through the frames of the education-based regime of study, both MOOCs and free, autonomous universities appear to present challenges to contingent faculty's push for increased valuing of their professionalization.

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the world collaborated on a common course (e.g., militant research on struggles around gentrification), each location could take responsibility for preparing a part of the shared curriculum for a particular course meeting. Then, using MOOC technology, for each meeting each group could have a mutual video conference call with all of the other groups (projected on a screen at each location), with the facilitation duties being taken on by whichever group designed the curriculum for that meeting. The basic elements for such technology are already freely available (e.g., with Google Hangout), but they could be improved for the specific features of connecting across horizontalist classrooms, particularly for having multiple participants at each location.

The current corporate use of MOOCs has increased universities' reliance on tenure-stream professors, as their filmed lectures are transmitted to thousands of students, including potentially their use at 'lower tier' universities in place of courses that faculty would have developed and implemented, thereby reducing the valuation of the capacities of faculty at those places to the level of their merely administering discussions and grading exams associated with the distant, 'upper tier' tenure-stream faculty's lecture. Free, autonomous universities have been accused of making similar exacerbations of contingent faculty's problems: they could be seen as supporting unwaged teaching labor, thereby depressing wages for the class of teachers as a whole, and further, their principle of 'anyone can teach' could be seen as degrading the valuation of professionalized teaching qualifications.

The contingent faculty who make such accusations put much affective weight behind them, and thus, practitioners of free, autonomous universities should not dismiss them. Rather, in order to see contingent faculty as potential co-participants-in-struggle with whom to build relationships, they should take these criticisms as a spur to develop better ways to articulate the differences of their projects from those of the neoliberal MOOC corporations that are contributing to the de-valuation of faculty's professional qualities. Then, practitioners can have better frames for grappling with the gaps between their practices and their ideals. Again, we need to differentiate these challenges on the basis of regimes of study, here articulated in relation to the different elements of professionalization: gaining capacities vs. valuation of those capacities. A key difference between the education-based regime of study and alternative regimes is in the modes through which such valuation happens. In the education regime, with its institutionalized

spatio-temporal segmentations and divisions of the practices of teaching, study, and knowledge production, the practices of evaluating students' capacities for becoming teachers and researchers (i.e., professional faculty) are subsumed into expert-controlled, exam-measured, hierarchical disciplines. In alternative regimes of study, particularly in one that eschews the technologies of exams, expertise, and governance that would short-circuit the continuous circulation of teaching-knowledge-study, the practices for evaluating students' capacities as potential professional faculty are much messier, as they are intertwined with the same immanent plane of teaching-knowledge-study through which those capacities were gained.

Through these differentiating frames, I argue for rejecting professionalization as reified expertise within the education-based regime and for promoting professionalization in continually unsettled/ing flows of teaching-knowledge-study, supported with infrastructures for such an alternative regime of study. Autonomous universities should create such infrastructures, and they should build relationships with each other—and with others who desire such an alternative regime—through constituting an alter-university movement. Considering that there are many actors who could be connected into such a movement—basically anyone engaged in study, whether struggling within and against the education-based regime of study or with those who are marginalized from its institutions and who are enacting alternative regimes—the potential audiences of my call for such a movement are very broad and diverse. Thus, rather than attempting the, perhaps impossible, challenge of writing one document that could resonate with all of those audience at once, I focus in the rest of this Conclusion on writing articulations of this call for two particular sub-groups of this audience: participants in free, autonomous

universities (whom I have already addressed a great deal in Chapter 4) and contingent faculty. The former's organizers are creating the nascent infrastructure for such a movement, while the latter constitute a massive group of actors—over one million in the US—who could bring their capacities for teaching and research into such an infrastructure and, thereby, realize those capacities more fully and satisfyingly in comparison with how they are currently (not) enjoying them in the institutions of the education regime.

My main reason for beginning my narration of such a call with these two sub-audiences in particular is that I see potentials for constituting many felicitous, symbiotic relations across them in and through an alter-university movement. I started to articulate one of these potentials with my (admittedly abstract) elaboration of the alternative kind of professionalization, and of its valuation, that contingent faculty could enjoy through autonomous universities that create an infrastructure for alternative regimes of study. In order to articulate this potential further, in the following section I flesh out another, conversely related one: the potential for seeing how contingent faculty's fear of becoming de-professionalized and of the de-valuing of their professionalization—i.e., of being treated as the non-valued, 'waste' product of the education regime—can be transformed into a constructive affect when put into relation with alternative regimes of study. Particularly, by taking inspiration from the imaginal possibilities that many historical and contemporary movements have articulated in their struggles against their marginalization from institutions of education—against their being treated as 'waste'—contingent faculty can create new imaginal trajectories for their own nascent movement.

The nascentness of the movement must be emphasized, as there is currently no such thing as a coherent 'contingent faculty movement.' Rather, what we have now are merely a few small, loosely connected groups—such as the New Faculty Majority, the Coalition of Contingent Academic Labor, and some unions of contingents through SEIU, United Steel Workers, and the AAUP—who sometimes claim to be part of a united 'movement' that represent the million contingent faculty across the US, speaking in their name as a means to push for reforms within the institutions of the status quo. Generally, these groups seek to jump from marginal status to greater inclusion within these existing structures—as seen in their framing of their so-called movement as 'the new faculty majority,' affirming their majoritarian aspirations rather than their minor potentials, i.e., with dissonance, subversion, and resistance in relation to the institutions of the education regime.

Considering the obstacles to contingent faculty constituting themselves as a coherent, minor, transformative movement, beyond the more 'external' obstacles of their precarious lives and working conditions, a key, more 'internal' obstacle is from contingent faculty's lack of a common political position, such as a shared identity around which to form the collective subject of their political movement—e.g., the proletariat, women, blackness, etc. Rather, the position they share is a more amorphous, structural position, which could be described generally in terms of precarity, contingency, casualization, and flexibilization in relation to their employment and working conditions in the institutions of higher education. Beyond this shared structural position, they have heterogeneous identities, experiences, backgrounds, cultures, etc. In response to this lack of a political subject, some have sought to create a new subject around which the moment

could cohere, such as the ‘precariat,’ the ‘new faculty majority,’ or the ‘cognitariat.’ Yet, none of these figures has caught on as a lightning rod for a new movement. Perhaps this is because of the particularly strong character of the ‘ambivalent educational self’ that contingent faculty hold, accompanied by the strong ideological forces and more obviously material conditions pushing them to favor the career-oriented side of that ambivalence and against the potentially movement-oriented, worker solidarity side (which I elaborated in the Introductory Chapter).

Rather than attempting to constitute a the subject of the movement in advance of the movement itself, I instead take inspiration from Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s concept of ‘the multitude’ (Hardt and Negri 2004). Unlike the mass, the people, and the proletariat, portraying 'the multitude' as the subject of revolutionary struggle calls for us to move away from representing any particular identities and towards enabling the people who make up the multitude to grapple—through communication and study—with the differences and commonalities across their singular positions. The new subjectivities of the movement do not precede the revolution but rather they compose themselves through practices of collective study in and for the movement. Also, from a decolonial perspective, this approach troubles the modernist/colonialist assumptions of individualized subjects, as the participants constitute a collective subject through grappling with the tensions between and across different possible subject positions (e.g., the tensions between: on the one hand, graduate instructors and contingent faculty in relation to the undergrad students they teach, seeing across the 'glass floor' of capitalist reproduction and production, and forming bonds of solidarity in struggle for abolishing that system; and on the other hand, their relations to tenure-stream faculty, feeling

ambivalence of desires to take on their positions in order to gain security while also wanting to abolish the class system).

Whatever the collective subject of this movement is called, be it the 'multitude' or 'precariat' or many names, I argue that it will emerge through common projects across different, singular forms for collectivities of people in relation to their place-and-body particular circumstances. Yet, rather than diffusing the revolutionary potentials of this movement into relativism, I submit that the challenge for potential participants in this movement is to constitute its collective subjects through practices of study-teaching-knowledge in regimes of study alternative to that of education. But, to say simply that contingent faculty should get together and study something would be too vague. Instead, I propose that the initial (and continuing) object of study should be the histories of movements that have also struggled around their conditions of marginalization—as de-valued 'waste'—in relation to the institutions of the education-based regime of study and that enacted alternative regimes of study in and through their movements. While the current leaders of attempts at a constituting a contingent faculty movement focus narrowly on an expansion of the education regime's labor system for greater inclusivity, they neglect opportunities to challenge the oppressive characteristics of that system—challenges which have been made by other past and present movements, such as those of Black Power, Feminism, Queer Liberation, Chicanismo, Marxism, and 3rd World Liberation.

In these movements, autonomous study practices (e.g., study groups) have been central, and they have had some successes in creating more institutionalized places for their study within the higher education institutions (e.g., Black Campus Centers, Black

Studies and Women's Studies departments, etc). But, they fell short of their goals due to many obstacles: repression, internal fracturing (sometimes provoked by state infiltration), isolation, co-optation, and recuperation. Yet, their movements and the 'imaginal machines' of their historical missions continue today: to create elements of a Black, Feminist, Queer, Decolonial, Anti-capitalist University, movements for which could be combined in more constituently powerful, intersectional ways. Thus, not only should those who desire a contingent faculty movement take up these historical movements as their object of study, but also they should seek out the contemporary participants in continuations of these movements to become co-participants in collective study projects, so as to constitute new subjectivities of an 'alter-university movement' together.

Through articulating relations of collaborative study, they can build affective relations across their movements, take inspiration from their visions (their 'imaginal machines' and 'freedom dreams' – e.g., 'the Black University'), build intersectional links between these visions and movements, grapple with their differences and commonalities, and organize in solidarity with each other for common goals. By seeing each other as part of a broader 'alter-university movement': within and against their being positioned as the 'waste' of the education-based regime of study, as the converse side of their organizing with each other through and for their value practices in alternative regimes of study.

This expansion of a politics of 'waste' in education builds on Marc Bousquet's Marxist critique of mainstream narratives about the 'crises of higher education' (Bousquet 2008). In the first chapter of his book he focuses his critical lens on the use of 'job market' theory, not only by neoliberals who use it to explain away graduates who supposedly 'freely choose' to take non-academic jobs, but also by liberal tenure-stream

faculty who took up this 'job market' rhetoric to present a simplifying 'solution' of balancing 'supply' and 'demand' (Bousquet 2008, 17-20). This narrative defines the relations between tenure-stream faculty and graduate employees in administrative, managerial ways—whereby faculty would administer the 'market'—rather than as co-workers, who could organize in solidarity with each other. The ideology of the 'job market' serves as a rhetorical device to "legitimate and produce faculty passivity and union complicity in the face of the wholesale restructuring of the academic workplace by activist legislatures and administrations" (21). For a better way of describing the relation between graduate education and the system of academic labor, Bousquet turns to the experiences of organized graduate employees. From their perspective, "increasingly, the holders of the doctoral degree are not so much the *products* of the graduate-employee labor system as its *by-products*, insofar as that labor system exists primarily to recruit, train, supervise, and legitimate the employment of non-degreed students and contingent faculty." While unorganized graduate employees and contingent faculty "understand that they are treated *like* shit," when they organize themselves they see themselves "as the *actual* excrement of the system," and as such, they "can perform acts of blockage," in the sense of "refusing to be expelled" (26-27). Through taking on this consciousness of themselves as having the "capacity for blockage," i.e., through "having an excrement theory of their own," degree-holding graduates and contingent faculty can use their collective power to force the system to give in to their demands and to transform itself. Under this force, "the system organizing the inside must rapidly succumb," because they "are the system's constitutive exterior: without expelling the degree holder, the system could not be what it is" (26-27).

Bousquet's call for taking on this "excremental theory" from the perspective of organized graduate employee labor is provocative and powerful for its radical challenge to the system as a whole—for "the way it addresses the system as a totality, enabling us to see that few people situated in the education ecology really benefit from the system of cheap teaching" (29). Precisely in considering this potential challenge, however, a problem with Bousquet's account appears: what 'system' is Bousquet talking about, and how does he delimit the boundaries of this system such that he can speak of it as a 'totality'? As a constructively critical extension of his theory, I point to a serious shortcoming in the way he limits his definition to the system of 'graduate education,' while neglecting to engage the ways in which it is inextricably bound up with the wider system of higher education, the education-based regime of study generally, and capitalist, colonialist, and white supremacist states, on multiple scales from the metropolitan to the global. Further, in neglecting to engage controversies over the definition of the boundaries of 'the system,' Bousquet also misses the opportunity to describe the ways in which processes of disposal of 'waste' happens not only from graduate education but at each of these levels of the broader systems—e.g., with the abject figures of so-called 'dropouts' from the secondary, post-secondary, and graduate levels. Finally, through considering the hierarchical relations between these different levels, we can see the ways in which these 'waste' disposal processes are co-constitutive with the processes of measuring and assigning *value* to the products—e.g., the 'graduates'—of each of level.

Thus, I extend Bousquet's "excremental theory" to *all* levels of the broader institutions of the education-based regime of study, including that regime itself and its constitutive exterior of those who are hidden in the "global shadows" of neo-colonial

capitalism, as I discussed in my Introductory Chapter—e.g., the Congolese workers who extract the precious metals used in the computers that are the backbone of American higher education (Ferguson 2006). This theory provides a lens through which to see the potential connections between movements of those who are made into 'waste products' at all of these levels to organize themselves, not only into interconnected blockages on a revolutionary scale, but also into the collective subjects of an 'alter-university movement'—who can support each other in stepping away from the education-based regime of study, critiquing its institutions from both inside and outside, practicing alternative regimes of study, and connecting with infrastructures for such alternatives, such as free, autonomous universities. Without such a robust theory, Bousquet delves into wishful thinking when he assumes that the wider system, of which the system of graduate education is a subordinate part, "must rapidly succumb" by the pressure of merely one of its sub-system's waste products. In response, the system could merely absorb the force of this waste and relieve its pressure through one of its other escape valves—e.g., by making tuition at the lower levels more expensive and thereby increasing 'dropout' rates. Rather, a truly effective challenge to the wider system requires relationship-building and collaboration in organizing across movements of refusal—and creating subversive alternatives—with and by *all* of those who would be relegated to the 'wastebin' of educational history.

For efforts to connect contingent faculty organizing with broader movements of the abject figures of the education regime, a key challenge is to reveal the colonial, capitalist character of the ideal of 'security' in academic labor, both in teaching and in employment. Against continuing to circulate a dichotomy of 'contingency' vs. 'security'

that valorizes the latter over the former, I call for the contingent academic labor movement to unsettle 'security'—i.e., to unsubscribe from this dichotomy by taking critical genealogical perspectives on the problematic history that has constructed it and made it seem to be common sense. This history includes, from the perspective of 'security' in employment, the historic compromise of the professoriate with administrators in the early 20th century that produced the institution of tenure *instead of* pursuing a radical union movement (Barrow 1990; Newfield 2003). Thereby, this compromise set the stage for the growth and sedimentation of the two-tiered professoriate over the coming century, which has consistently prevented the faculty from organizing together as a working class and, instead, subjected the 'new faculty majority' to scrambling for crumbs in a competitive rat race (Berry 2005; Bousquet 2008; Teeuwen and Hantke 2007).

From the perspective of 'security' in the classroom, considering the experimental situation of autonomous university classes (such as in EXCO) can destabilize desires for the 'security' of the normal university course with its coercive forces of grades, credits, and tuition that make students attend. Connecting these two senses of destabilizing 'security,' by detaching from the feeling of necessity of submitting to the academic rat race for an ideal of 'security' through tenure, contingent academics could use free schools as infrastructures for fulfilling their desires to study while building relationships with each other—as well as with others who are marginalized from the institutions of the education regime—for organizing, such as through unions, to improve their working, living, and studying conditions within those institutions and simultaneously creating alternatives. Nascent forms of such symbiotic infrastructures have already seen with the

relationships built since fall 2011 between the adjunct union at CUNY and a free school called the Free University of New York.[175]

Relating back to my dissertation's problematic: the mechanisms of precarity with the two-tiering of the professoriate are one of the main sources of the fears that academics feel when considering an abolitionist, decolonial critique of the institutions of the education-based regime of study—e.g., fearing that speaking critically of, or organizing within, universities could put them on a blacklist for jobs or simply take time away from work that could help them compete. Building relationships between the infrastructures of free schools and union organizing, could help reduce the conditions for such fears through giving contingent faculty space to grapple with these tensions together—*within and against* universities, *with* communities who are excluded and marginalized from universities, and *for* abolitionist, decolonial movements—while also organizing together to defend each other in case of repression and to support each other collectively.

EXCO and other free university projects offer a means for participants to de-codify seemingly 'natural' desires for climbing the professional ladder of an academic career. The capitalist logic behind the imaginary of this normal academic career trajectory assumes that desire exists because of some kind of lack, such as a lack of expertise, recognition, power, or wealth. By contrast, free universities create conditions for a regime of study in which desires for learning can be seen as affirmative and constructive, as motivations for connecting with others to study together for composing a better common world. Thereby, their courses create space-times in which academic

[175] I have interviewed several contingent academics in New York who have also been organizing and teaching with the Free University of New York, relationships that were catalyzed partly through their organizing with the CUNY Adjunct Project, Occupy Wall Street, and Occupy CUNY.

participants, especially grad student-workers and contingent faculty, can feel some respite from the pressures of being 'within and against' higher education—pressures to recuperate their energies within the normalizing subject forms of an academic career trajectory—such that they can divert some of these energies towards their latent radical desires, transmuting them into collective projects of study, situated 'with and for' relationships with others who are marginalized and excluded from higher education.

Study within and for Free Universities: Against the Romance of Community, Commons, and Education

In my above call for building relationships between the free universities movement and contingent faculty organizing, I argued for making free universities into a means for building relationships between radical movements and the 'waste products' of the education regime at all of its institutional levels—from those 'dropouts' who are pushed out or rise out of secondary school and college to the 'new faculty majority' who become perpetually stuck in precarious academic labor. In order to make this potential means into a real, thriving infrastructure for an 'alter-university movement,' the organizers of free universities, such as EXCO, must not only shift towards building relationships with contingent faculty but also to re-work their institutions in ways that facilitate more continual, intensive study of their projects' constitutive tensions. In the following, I analyze some obstacles that EXCO organizers have faced in achieving this goal, and I offer some recommendations for overcoming those obstacles.

In facing the challenges of grappling with tensions between rootedness in communities and coordination across communities in line with EXCO's value practices (as discussed in Chapter 4), at the levels of both its wider organization and its courses,

EXCO organizers had been too uncritical in their use of ideals of 'community'—as well as in their accompanying use of ideals of 'commons' to describe communities' place-based relations with their resources. Building on Miranda Joseph's call "against the romance of community" for its supporting capitalism through legitimating hierarchies of gender, sexuality race, and nation (Joseph 2002), I diagnose subtle forms of such romanticization in EXCO's shift to a model of 'community-led chapters.' Many of the EXCO organizers took critical perspectives on ideals of 'community,' such as through being critical of the ways that universities and governments use discourses of 'community engagement' to justify projects that are generally acquiescent to the status quo, while simultaneously using the language of 'community engagement' tactically to expropriate resources, such as grants, from these institutions. Further, they spoke of the segregations, inequalities, and hierarchies within and across communities, and of how these are inconsistent with EXCO's principles and, thus, of the need to attempt to combat them in and through EXCO's practices. Yet, the translation of these theoretical ideals into practice has been far from smooth. Now, on the basis of the theory developed through my dissertation, I have a framework with which to give an analysis for why EXCO organizers have fallen short in their attempts to grapple with the tensions around 'community' and 'commons,' and for how they can improve their approach.

The key for my analysis comes from insights that Erin Dyke and I produced through our critical engagement with these tensions on the micro-political level of a course (our course on 'Radical Pedagogy'). Through exploring the infinitely complex conditions for creating situations of study, we saw that there are unlimited potential controversies over the composition of communities in a classroom and over the commons

that those communities use for their study. Controversies that participants and facilitators in a course could engage—including over what value practices govern their interactions, their affective relationships, their goals, their modes of study-teaching-knowledge, their geo-and-body politically situated epistemologies, and their ways of figuring space-time—such controversies are unsettled, investigated, and settled in and through 'the common,' i.e., the means, conditions, and products of communication. Through romanticizing ideas of 'community' and 'commons' in subtle ways, we had unwittingly settled many of these controversies prior to providing the course participants with opportunities for engaging them.

Further, through romanticizing the idea of 'education,' we had been importing other ways of settling these controversies, particularly through the educational imaginary's individualizing concepts of the 'student' who 'learns' knowledge from the 'expert' teacher. Reflecting and writing together about our class on 'radical pedagogy,' which initially took 'normal' modes of education as our focus of critique, we came to develop a critical lens on the schema of education in general. For this reason, we shifted to the concepts of 'study' and different 'regimes of study,' as an alternative way of talking about the phenomena that we had been describing with simplifying narratives around types of 'education.' Through our more complex conceptual framework, we could now see this phenomena as having a potentially infinite flow between inter-related activities of study-teaching-knowledge, engaging in all the potential controversies around a situation of collective intellectual activity, while avoiding the closing down of that flow in preparation for governance with the education-based regime of study's practices of 'expertise' and 'exams' (Moten and Harney 2009).

Deploying the theory that I have developed around the undercommons and decolonial, abolitionist study, I can offer a way for organizers of EXCO—as well as other free universities—to create an infrastructure that supports course facilitators and participants in their activities of study that open up and grapple with their myriad controversies around 'community' and 'commons.' At the end of Chapter 4, I set out some recommendations of questions that such an infrastructure should help facilitators and participants develop capacities for considering in the design and implementation of their course curricula. Considering that there are infinite possible controversies to engage, EXCO and other free universities should not simply open up a space for relativistic 'discovery,' but rather they should seeks to support courses that create situations of study that are connected with radical movements, so as to continue the value practices that motivated their constitution: *within and against* the institutions of the education-based regime of study that are entwined with white supremacist, colonial, hetero-patriarchal capitalism, and *with and for* those who are marginalized from those institutions and who seek to abolish and displace them.

Thus, I must also demonstrate how the theory I offer can be useful for guiding free university organizers in their building of relationships—both for creating classes and through participating in classes—in ways that are harmonious with the growth of such radical movements. Examples of EXCO's courses already having had movement-strengthening effects include, among others: the Unsettling Minnesota collective inspired wider decolonization organizing;[176] a course put on by a Palestine solidarity group, as

[176] Although the Unsettling Minnesota collective is currently inactive, the sourcebook that they made has influenced many others around North America, such as through Unsettling America, which is "an emerging decentralized network of autonomous groups and individuals dedicated to mental and territorial decolonization throughout Turtle Island and the 'Americas.'" – See http://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com

part of the Boycott Divestment Sanctions (BDS) movement, compared settler colonialisms in the United States, the Middle East and India;[177] the 'Bike Feminism,' 'Women and Trans Only Bike Maintenance,' 'Radical Feminism' courses have strengthened movements against patriarchy, heteronormativy, cis-sexism, and the car-dominated "regime of automobility" (Böhm et al 2006); and the many reading groups on anarchism, autonomism, and Marxism have been intertwined with building anti-capitalist movements. The latter have included courses such as 'Theorizing the University' and 'Marx's *Capital*' whose participants included many organizers of a graduate student-worker unionization movement at the University of Minnesota from 2008 and on, which itself was taking the relay from relationships built in earlier struggles around the education industry, including labor union strikes, the struggle to save General College, and the previous graduate unionization drive (discussed in Chapter 4).

Considering these 'edu-struggles' as the origin of the U of M chapter of EXCO, in combination with the struggle for equal access at Macalester from which EXCO initially emerged, the prospects for EXCO organizers to continue the value practices that motivated their engagement in these struggles—for equality, labor rights, and campus democracy—require an expansion of these edu-focused struggles to combine with wider radical movements. This lesson was driven home for EXCO organizers through their attempts to make good on their principle of providing equal access to the resources for study to members of all communities, especially those most marginalized from the education system. The challenges they experienced forced them to recognize the need for articulating their university-focused struggles with further movements, including wider

[177] This course was facilitated by members of Teachers Against Occupation – For more info, see http://teachersagainstoccupation.blogspot.com/

radical movements as well as other education-related struggles, particularly around 'the schools-to-prisons pipeline,' the marginalization and policing of undocumented immigrants, the settler colonial suppression of indigenous knowledge, the burdens of student debt (and aiming to connect debt abolitionism with prison abolitionism and decoloniality), and contingent faculty labor—working toward an 'alter-university movement.' After attempting to re-structure the organization—expanding to a 'community-embedded chapters' model—that could better connect with these wider movements, reflecting on the tensions EXCO organizers faced and recognizing the failures partly caused by their romanticizing ideas of 'community,' 'commons,' and 'education,' we came to understand the insufficiency of our theoretical apparatus for grappling with the myriad challenges created when trying to combine all of these movements at once.

A key tension EXCO organizers must face in attempting to connect with wider movements is between horizontality and accountability. An advantage of focusing on a more delimited movement, such as with the struggles around equal access at Macalester or around labor rights and campus democracy at the University of Minnesota, is that giving priority to these relatively clearly defined groups and issues makes better conditions for those participants to have a sense of accountability to the movement. Yet, through EXCO's seeing how these particular issues were necessarily bound up—via systems of interconnected institutions—with wider issues and then attempting to expand its organizing relationships to interconnect with movements who were struggling around those wider issues, EXCO organizers shifted away from their initial moorings in a hierarchy of struggles. Now, they are faced with the challenge of re-creating structures

for accountability, with at least the effectiveness that they had enjoyed with the hierarchy but with more flexibility to include, and communicate across, participants who are embedded in multiple communities and movements.

To work towards building an infrastructure that can better support EXCO participants' dedicated engagement in these struggles, while grappling productively with the tensions between horizontalism and accountability, I offer propositions based on a theory that can guide their understanding of possible harmonies and dissonances—through articulating the concepts of conflicting commons, undercommons, the common, and regimes of study. Understanding the utility of this theory for these purposes begins with recognizing the existence of conflicts between different types of commons, i.e., different value practices for mediating the relations between people and resources—for example, conflicts of: patriarchal vs. feminist commons, colonial vs. indigenous commons, etc. (see Chapters 2 and 3 for elaboration). Examining the urban places of both universities and marginalized neighborhoods, we can see multiple intersecting communities, with each associating themselves with commons that have various relations of conflict and harmony between them. For example, in a university course (or an EXCO course), the students and professor (or EXCO participants and facilitator) constitute a community together and they create commons temporarily for and through their studying together. Their practices of creating and regulating these commons are a battleground of conflict between different value practices that the different participants bring with them for figuring their norms for study with each other, their resources (e.g., texts, desks and chairs, computers, relationships, and embodied capacities and knowledge), and their projects and goals for the course. Compared to university courses with their grades,

credits, tuition, and salaried 'expert' faculty, EXCO courses usually have relatively far less coercive pressures on participants to accept the value practices of the facilitator, and thereby, potentially better conditions for the participants to discuss the different value practices that they bring to the course, and their potential harmonies and conflicts, for creating and regulating their commons in the course together. Yet, such opportunities exist in university courses as well, just with greater limiting conditions on realizing them. Conversely, considering the challenges of making EXCO participants return, the coercive pressures of a university course give its communities and commons conditions for greater durability and accountability, at least during the fixed time period of the course.

Bringing in the concept of 'undercommons,' I offer some guidance for understanding these limiting and enabling conditions for grappling with conflicts between different value practices that compose the commons in any situation of study, and for constituting conditions of their durability and accountability. On a loose analogy—though with clearly traceable continuities—the institutions of the education-based regime of study are comparable with the slave plantation system described in Chapter 3, in the sense of being sets of institutions for perpetuating white supremacy, capitalism, hetero-patriarchy, and colonialism—especially when focusing on the former's relations with segregation, policing, and prisons, such as through the lens of 'the new Jim Crow' and 'the schools-to-prisons pipeline' (Alexander 2010; Meiners 2007). Extending this analogy, I compare the maroon communities of escaped slaves with the communities of people who are marginalized from the contemporary education system. Both leave a dominant institution while being stigmatized in dominant discourses for doing so, whether as the 'wild, untamed maroons' or the 'undeveloped, uneducated dropouts,' both

of which were/are seen as living in communities marked with racial stereotypes, such as 'cultures of criminality, laziness, and rejection of work,' and their places and bodies are degraded as 'lacking value' and 'wasted.' In Chapter 3, after using the 'undercommons' to describe the embattled relations between maroon communities and the state, plantations, and other communities—and the ways that practices of study are involved in them—I also used this concept for describing the contemporary relations between the state, capital, and different commons embedded in marginalized communities and radical movements in the U.S., which I demonstrated with Zapatismo-influenced social centers. Here, I take a different cut at study in the undercommons, through the lens of a project, EXCO, that has taken an approach similar to the social centers of connecting with and amplifying practices of study in marginalized communities, but that also takes on a more intentional strategy of engaging with resistance to the dominant institutions of the education-based regime of study, so as to continue its constituent struggles.

At the end of Chapter 4, I gave recommendations for free university organizers to engage with these tensions in relation to their creation of the 'facilitator support' elements of their infrastructure. Expanding those recommendations here to wider parts of the infrastructure, I use the 'study in the undercommons' theory to offer guidance to free university organizers in grappling with their central tensions—around community-rootedness vs. communication across communities in line with radical value practices, horizontalism vs. accountability, among others, articulated on multiple levels. To conclude, I offer four additional strategies for approaching these tensions as described through the lens of 'undercommons' (while noting that each could be elaborated into a full case study).

First, coming from the perspective of courses in the dominant universities, there are many potential harmonies between the commons created in those courses and the commons both of free university courses and of marginalized communities. Faculty who subscribe to radical value practices could use their university's 'service learning' or 'internship' programs, or autonomously make their own assignments for students, to connect them with marginalized communities via free university courses, whether by taking courses, facilitating their own courses, or other forms of organizing. Examples of this have occurred with university students taking or teaching EXCO courses and organizing with EXCO as 'interns' for credit in their university courses. But, EXCO organizers could do more to make these approaches a central feature of their broader infrastructure, such as through building more stable relationships with sympathetic university professors and offering resources and workshops for faculty and students. This could make EXCO and other free universities into critical interfaces for helping people from marginalized communities to access universities on their own terms and to collaborate with students within universities to use their resources for projects in alternative regimes of study.

One tactic for such a critical interface could be to "inflate the credit"—i.e., for registered university students to receive credit towards their degrees for doing class and research work in collaboration with communities and movements outside of the university.[178] The university communities, particularly the sub-communities of faculty

[178] I draw this strategy of "inflating the credit" from conversations with Claudia Bernardi and Paolo Do, based on their work within the Eccedi Sottrai Crea (ESC) Atelier, a social center and militant research collective in Rome, Italy, which creates a radical interface between their University, La Sapienza, and the wider metropolis -- http://www.escatelier.net . Through occupying an administrative building, they forced the administration to grant University credit for the projects of collective study and self-organizing that they facilitate through connecting sympathetic professors with movements, such as around precarious labor and migrant struggles. They are following the Italian autonomist Marxist tradition of struggling to "inflate

and administrators within them, have a monopoly on the institutions for valorizing study practices through credentialing students. This credentialing function gives participants in the university a sense of relevance of that kind of study for their lives within the capitalist economy in which such credentials are necessary tickets for a job. One of EXCO's challenges is creating conditions for participants to find a sense of relevance in their courses, as a supplement and, potentially, a replacement for the kind of relevance they find through the accredited education system. EXCO's lack of credentialing gives it the advantage of avoiding the commodification of study. Investing energy into experiments with one's own practices of study without credentialing, however, is far more risky for people who come from underprivileged backgrounds but have the possibility of attending university than for people who can fall back on their privileges or who are unable to attend the university altogether.

Compared to normal 'service learning' programs, EXCO's "inflating the credit" approach could facilitate the building of more direct relationships between students, movements, and communities for self-organizing and self-valorizing their study projects, rather than mediated through the university's disciplinary metrics. This approach has precedents in the radical movements that created departments of Women's Studies and Black Studies, among others (e.g., with the Black Student Union at San Francisco State having study groups through EXCO that led to their creating the first Black Studies department). By taking an 'undercommons' approach, EXCO organizers could be more attentive to avoiding the obstacles that Studies departments have experienced of

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the wage" to value all laboring activity, including that in the home, not only that within the traditional workplace. To read my interview with Claudia Bernardi, see "Contaminating the University, Creating Autonomous Knowledge: Occupied Social and Cultural Centers in Italy," on ClassWarU.org - http://wp.me/p2oBwp-3H .

becoming disconnected from movements and caught up in academic circles, which often recuperate the revolutionary energies of these movements for the "academic industrial complex" and merely reformist projects (Yee 2011; Ferguson 2012). Taking a critical lens on the relations for study within university classrooms, the professor could use connections with an EXCO course to create a situation in which the commons of their classroom are more in harmony with the commons of marginalized communities and radical movements. Yet, they have many limiting conditions, especially from the education regime's institutions of grades, credits, and tuition, which push their classroom commons to take on neoliberal capitalist value practices, making students into 'self-entrepreneurs' who treat their engagement with members of marginalized communities as mere opportunities for gaining a better grade in the course and a line on their resume about 'community engagement.'

As a counter-measure to such neoliberal commons, EXCO organizers should develop a set of resources as part of their facilitator training, for both university professors and EXCO course facilitators—along the lines of the recommendations that I set out at the end of Chapter 4. This could also include developing participants' capacities for engaging questions around the "imperceptible politics" (Papadopoulos et al 2008) involved in making students' various activities in university courses and marginalized communities selectively visible or invisible to the university's mechanisms of surveillance and measurement, around helping students de-link from their subscriptions to desires for individual, competitive career trajectories within capitalism, and around equipping students with skills for engaging in meaningful, mutually fulfilling ways with the projects of marginalized communities (e.g., for un-learning Eurocentric

epistemologies and for legitimating the knowledge-teaching-study in those communities' informal networks of cooperation).

Beyond the "inflating the credit" strategy, a second way that the 'undercommons' theory can guide free university organizers is in developing strategies around the relations, both conflictual and harmonious, between their infrastructure of support for courses and the dominant universities as a source of funding. On the side of potential harmonious relations, the commons of 'student life' and 'community engagement' created within the university bureaucracy can potentially resonate well with commons of free university courses and associated commons of marginalized communities, through organizers tapping into them as a source of spaces and of money for course facilitators' honoraria and supplies, recognizing the necessity of money for living within the capitalist economy. Beyond these merely instrumental, territorial and financial relations, free university organizers can also find harmony with some of the value practices of the university commons—e.g., around providing resources for study, community engagement, social justice, equity, anti-racism, etc—to the extent that various groups on campus push for these norms to be adopted within the bureaucracy, such as student groups who subscribe to these values organizing to have representatives on grant-awarding bodies or to gain their own spaces (e.g., GLTBQ Student Centers and Black Campus Centers). Simultaneously with seeking to foster these harmonies, organizers must attend to conflicts with other value practices of the university commons, particularly to the extent that they entail value practices of the education-based regime of study and of capitalist, colonial, white supremacist, hetero-patriarchy—both from participants subscribing to these norms and their being institutionalized in universities.

Recognizing both these potential harmonies and conflicts, free university organizers should take on a kind of "imperceptible politics" that selectively reveals or masks their value practices to the extent that doing so is useful for gaining access to money and resources, for building relationships with allies, and for spreading their value practices, while avoiding the many obstacles that would compromise the commons of the free university, marginalized communities, and their wider movements. These obstacles include, most obviously, allowing the value practices of the dominant university to override those of the free university in the courses' relations with marginalized communities and radical movements.

A more subtle but insidious obstacle is from enabling the free university organizers to create a kind of 'education commons' that reproduces some of the central assumptions of the education-based regime of study. One such assumption is the need for a monopoly by a few organizers over control of resources for study-knowledge-teaching within formal courses. This was essentially what happened with the university-based EXCO chapters' control over financial resources, and this was at odds with EXCO's aim to create commons in its organization and in courses whereby members of marginalized communities have control over resources for more formal practices of study-teaching-knowledge in relation with their informal networks of cooperation. With these obstacles to becoming involved in the organizing leadership, potential participants from marginal communities retreated to the more informal kinds of study-teaching-knowledge in networks of cooperation in which they had already been engaged. A related obstacle is from neglecting the value practices of EXCO, from its history of struggle and its interrelations with radical movements, which call for resistance and subversion of the

education-based regime of study. Despite the existence of radical value practices in some commons of university courses, the education institutions overall have a parasitic relationship with the commons created within its courses: the hierarchical value practices of these commons, such as ‘expertise’ and ‘exams,’ act as the leading edges of enclosure, enacted through disciplinary mechanisms, which create subjects for capitalism and reproduce its class hierarchies.

Considering these potential harmonies, conflicts, and obstacles through the lens of ‘undercommons’ theory, I offer two more strategies to grapple with them for organizers of EXCO and other free universities. First, make the organization’s citywide meetings and working groups into ‘community assemblies’ (inspired by Zapatismo), as space-times for participants to grapple, via communication and study in the common, with conflicts over the value practices of their various commons. Further, see courses as themselves organizing space-times continuous with these assemblies, breaking down the distinction between ‘organizers,’ ‘facilitators,’ and ‘participants.’ Making the fundraising for each course the responsibility of the course participants themselves—while providing a supportive infrastructure for them, such as workshops on how to fundraise in grassroots ways—could mitigate against monopolies on decision-making over resources. Constructively, this could also empower participants to expand their course relationships for creating their commons into their communities, connecting symbiotically with their wider commons through informal networks of cooperation.

Fourth, and finally, develop mutually transformative relationships between union organizing and free universities. On the one hand, free university organizers and facilitators could take on projects of unionization, seeing themselves as co-workers

organizing together to improve their conditions of labor and study, both within free universities and the institutions of the education-based regime of study. On the other hand, this symbiosis could influence the labor movement to de-romanticize their views on education, both within their own programs of worker education (i.e., as a kind of vanguard of 'experts' who teach workers how to organize themselves) and within their tendency to treat the education system as one industry among others, neglecting the central role of education in reproducing capitalism.

This convergence of free universities and unions is especially important for contingent faculty organizing, as a core element of an 'alter-university movement.' Recognizing that the precarity of the majority of teaching jobs in higher education is co-constitutive with the 'waste' and 'value' produced at all other levels of the education system, contingent faculty organizing can connect with and mutually support union organizing across P-12 and higher education beyond the delimited boundaries of the university campus or the higher education system. With free universities creating infrastructures for continuous study-teaching-knowledge beyond education institutions, they offer places where grad students, contingent faculty, so-called 'dropouts,' and all who are produced as the education regime's 'waste' can engage in meaningful, affective study—for fostering alternative regimes of study with intergenerational, decolonial, abolitionist knowledge embedded within and across movements and struggles. Interrelating these free universities with an organizing approach in dominant institutions that enacts principles of solidarity, direct, and industrial unionism, participants can develop desires and capacities to create a world in which 'security' and 'value' for some does not come at the cost of precarity and wasting of others.

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